

JINKA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
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THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:
THE CASE OF SELECTED PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN
SOYAMA ZURYA WOREDA

MBA THESIS
BY
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SOYAMA ZURYA WOREDA

BY

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Declaration

I, Tagash Soromo, hereby declare that the thesis work titled “The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction of Selected Public Sector Organizations in *Soyama Zurya Woreda*” has been submitted to the Department of Management at Jinka University. This work is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Business Administration. It is my original work, not previously submitted for any degree at this or any other institution, and all sources used have been properly acknowledged.

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As research advisors, I hereby certify that I have read and evaluated this Thesis entitled “The Effect of service Quality on customer satisfaction: the Case of Selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda” which has been prepared under my guidance by Tagash Soromo. I recommend that the thesis be submitted as it fulfills the requirements for the award of MBA. Degree in Master of Business Administration

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List of acronyms

ECT: Expectation Confirmation Theory

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SERVPERF: Service Performance model

SERVQUAL: Service Quality model

TNA: Training Needs Assessment

Abstract

The study examined the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations within Soyama Zurya woreda. To achieve this, the research employed an

explanatory and descriptive design, utilizing a quantitative approach to collect data from 384 respondents was chosen from a population of 3,089 customers, selected through stratified sampling techniques based on Cochran's (1977) formula. The study focused on six key service quality dimensions: tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics, processed using IBM SPSS version 26. The correlation analysis demonstrated strong positive relationships between all service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Regression analysis further confirmed that each dimension significantly and positively influenced customer satisfaction, highlighting the critical role of service quality in shaping customer satisfaction. Based on this result this study recommended that public sector organizations to invest in strategies to enhance these service quality dimensions, ensuring they align with customer expectations. Additionally, the research suggested that future studies investigate the role of organizational culture and employee training in improving service quality and customer satisfaction. By addressing these areas, public organizations could better meet the needs of their communities, fostering greater trust and satisfaction among their customers.

Key terms: *Customer Satisfaction, Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, and Transparency*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presented a comprehensive overview of the study, encompassing its background, the problem it addressed, the research questions it sought to answer, the objectives it aimed to achieve, the significance of its findings, the scope of its investigation, and the operational definitions of key terms. The organization of the study was also outlined, providing a clear roadmap for the reader to follow throughout the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Background of the study

Service quality plays a central role in shaping customer perceptions and satisfaction across various industries. It is defined by the delivery of consistent, reliable, and efficient services that meet or exceed customer expectations. Service quality is assessed through multiple dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. Each of these dimensions contributes to the overall service experience. As research shows, service quality directly influences customer satisfaction, which ultimately impacts loyalty and retention (Parasuraman et al., 2020). Understanding this relationship is particularly crucial in public organizations where service delivery has a profound impact on society (Gounaris, 2021).

The importance of service quality extends beyond private businesses and plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions in public organizations. Public sector organizations often face the challenge of delivering consistent service quality due to bureaucratic structures and limited resources. A study by Ekinci and Hosseinpour (2020) highlighted the significance of service quality in enhancing citizens' trust in public institutions, which ultimately drives satisfaction. Moreover, the delivery of high-quality service by public organizations ensures that citizen' needs are met effectively, enhancing their confidence in governmental processes (Jiang & Tang, 2019). Furthermore, improving service quality in the public sector helps foster a sense of reliability and commitment, strengthening community relationships (Yuksel, 2021).

Customer satisfaction is a critical outcome of effective service delivery, especially in public organizations. It serves as an indicator of the effectiveness of service quality and impacts customer loyalty and retention. According to Grönroos (2020), customer satisfaction is directly

influenced by the perceived value of service, which includes factors such as timeliness, responsiveness, and professionalism. In the context of public organizations, the indicators of customer satisfaction are shaped by how well citizens' expectations are met, particularly in areas such as accessibility, communication, and transparency (Poh, 2019). These factors collectively determine whether customers will express positive or negative sentiments about the service they receive (Kunst & Lemmink, 2020).

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is often depicted as a cause-and-effect scenario. A well-designed service quality framework, if implemented effectively, positively impacts customer satisfaction. As Bitner et al. (2021) assert the quality of service influences customers' satisfaction by meeting or exceeding their expectations, thus leading to increased loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. This effect is particularly pronounced in the public sector, where citizens' experiences with government services can significantly shape their perceptions of the institution (Yang & Lee, 2020). Furthermore, service quality in the public sector directly impacts trust, which in turn affects the satisfaction levels of customers (Zhang & Liu, 2021).

Theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights into understanding the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The SERVQUAL model, proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985), is widely recognized as a foundational tool for evaluating service quality. According to this model, service quality is evaluated based on five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. More recent models have expanded these dimensions to include factors like transparency and ethical practices (Zeithaml et al., 2020). These frameworks provide a structured approach to measuring customer satisfaction, offering public organizations the means to assess and improve their service delivery effectively (Ladhari, 2020).

Historically, public organizations around the world have faced challenges in maintaining service quality due to inefficiencies in their operations. Issues such as lack of resources, bureaucratic red tape, and poor employee training have contributed to the decline in service delivery, leading to dissatisfaction among citizens (Agarwal & Soni, 2021). Studies have shown that these inefficiencies in the implementation of key service quality dimensions—such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance—directly influence the satisfaction levels of customers

(Anderson & Mittal, 2020). For instance, in many developing countries, limited infrastructure and lack of transparency often hinder public organizations from providing services that meet citizens' expectations (Gannon & Murphy, 2020).

Sub-Saharan Africa, a region characterized by unique socioeconomic challenges, has experienced persistent issues related to service quality in public organizations. Inadequate infrastructure, limited government resources, and a lack of professional training among public employees have led to poor service delivery, thus affecting customer satisfaction (Oguche & Tunde, 2020). According to Raghavan (2021), the inefficient implementation of key service quality dimensions, such as responsiveness and empathy, has resulted in dissatisfaction among citizens, leading to a decline in trust in government institutions. Furthermore, the lack of transparency and assurance in public services exacerbates the challenges, making it difficult for citizens to hold governments accountable for their actions (Munyua, 2021).

In Ethiopia, public organizations have also encountered significant challenges in delivering quality services due to inefficiencies in implementing essential service quality dimensions. A study by Tesfaye (2019) revealed that government institutions in Ethiopia often struggle with transparency, responsiveness, and reliability, leading to public dissatisfaction. The inefficiency of service delivery in areas like healthcare, education, and transportation has worsened citizens' perceptions of government services (Solomon, 2020). Additionally, the lack of effective communication and empathy from public servants has deepened dissatisfaction, leading to a general decline in public trust (Mulugeta & Alemu, 2020).

Focusing on the local context of Soyama Zurya Woreda, challenges related to service quality in public organizations are particularly evident. Issues such as poor infrastructure, lack of staff training, and inadequate resources have hindered the efficient delivery of services. According to a report by the Ethiopian Public Service Commission (2020), public organizations in this region struggle with maintaining the key dimensions of service quality, such as tangibility and responsiveness, which directly impacts customer satisfaction. Citizens often experience delays in service delivery, lack of transparency, and insufficient communication, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced trust in local government institutions (Beniam, 2020).

Therefore, conducting a study to evaluate the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in this specific locality is crucial to identifying targeted solutions for improving service delivery, and seeks to contribute to the existing literature and provide practical recommendations for improving service quality in this region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The issue of delivering high-quality services to customers in public organizations has gained increasing attention due to its importance in fostering satisfaction and loyalty. Public sector organizations, in particular, face numerous challenges in meeting customer expectations, especially regarding the consistency and reliability of services provided. Various studies have highlighted that service quality often falls short of customer expectations, leading to dissatisfaction and erosion of trust in public services (Jha et al., 2019; Osei et al., 2020; Mutinda, 2021). The inability to consistently deliver high-quality services in these organizations significantly impacts customer perceptions and ultimately affects their satisfaction levels. The challenges in improving service quality often stem from organizational inefficiencies, lack of skilled personnel, and the absence of effective service management strategies, contributing to the problem at hand (Nanda & Gupta, 2022).

One of the primary challenges in the public sector, particularly in Soyama Zurya Woreda, relates to ineffective service delivery across several critical dimensions: tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency. These aspects significantly influence customer satisfaction, but deficiencies in their application have been observed in the selected public organizations. Studies indicate that customers experience poor service delivery due to long waiting times, lack of transparency, and inadequate empathy from employees. Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap in the organization's ability to reliably meet customer needs (Ali & Mohamed, 2020; Dube & Renner, 2021; Patel, 2022). Addressing these challenges becomes imperative to enhance the overall service quality and ensure the satisfaction of citizens engaging with public services in this region.

A review of existing literature from diverse regions reveals a consistent trend regarding the factors that impact service quality and customer satisfaction. In India, studies have shown a direct correlation between reliability and customer satisfaction in public organizations (Reddy &

Kumar, 2019). Research conducted in Canada emphasized the importance of responsiveness and transparency in enhancing public sector service quality (Boucher, 2020). Pakistan's public sector has been critiqued for its poor service delivery, with an emphasis on the role of empathy and assurance in shaping customer satisfaction (Shah & Alam, 2020). Nigeria's findings pointed to the lack of reliability and the detrimental effects of delays in service delivery (Olalekan & Durojaiye, 2021). Similarly, research in Kenya highlighted the significance of tangibility in service satisfaction, particularly in government services (Mwangi & Muriuki, 2021). In Ethiopia, studies have identified the importance of transparency and reliability in shaping public sector service quality (Mengistu, 2022).

Despite the abundant literature addressing service quality in public organizations, there is a noticeable discrepancy between theoretical findings and their practical application. While numerous theories and frameworks suggest that dimensions like reliability, responsiveness, and empathy directly influence customer satisfaction, real-world implementations often fall short of these theoretical ideals. For instance, public sector organizations often struggle with the consistency and reliability of service delivery, as theorized in the literature. In practice, however, these organizations face logistical challenges and a lack of resources that hinder the effective application of these principles, calling for further research to better understand how these theoretical frameworks can be applied in specific organizational settings.

In addition to theoretical discrepancies, there are also significant conceptual gaps in the current body of knowledge regarding service quality in public organizations. While the literature suggests that dimensions such as tangibility and assurance play critical roles in customer satisfaction, there is insufficient exploration of how these factors interact and complement one another within a specific cultural or geographical context. This lack of conceptual clarity has led to gaps in understanding how service quality dimensions can be tailored to the unique needs of public sector organizations in developing regions such as Soyama Zurya Woreda. This gap highlights the need for a more context-specific analysis of service quality.

The methodological limitations of existing studies have contributed to the gaps in the current understanding of service quality and customer satisfaction. Many studies on service quality in public organizations have employed a narrow focus on qualitative approaches, often neglecting

the comprehensive, quantitative data that can reveal clear, measurable relationships between service quality factors and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, few studies have used explanatory or descriptive research designs that provide a robust framework for analyzing the underlying causes of service delivery issues. These methodological gaps undermine the reliability and validity of findings, suggesting a need for studies employing more diverse and rigorous research designs.

Moreover, significant data gaps exist in the field of service quality research, especially regarding specific populations and constructs that have yet to be fully explored. For instance, there is a lack of targeted data on how service quality dimensions affect different demographic groups, such as rural versus urban populations, or different age groups within the context of public service delivery. Additionally, there is a paucity of data on the impact of technological advancements on service quality and customer satisfaction in public organizations. These data gaps present opportunities for further exploration, particularly in regions such as Soyama Zurya Woreda, where the public sector's service delivery might be influenced by local cultural and technological factors.

Recognizing these limitations, this research undertook a rigorous assessment of the effects of service quality on customer satisfaction within Soyama Zurya Woreda. This investigation aimed to provide actionable insights for improving service delivery within specific public sector entities. The findings will contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the effect of reliability on customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?
2. To what extent does responsiveness affect customer satisfaction levels in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?
3. How far does assurance impact customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?
4. How does empathy affect customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?

5. How does tangibility influence customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?
6. How does transparency affect customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

1. To assess the effect of reliability on customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*
2. To analyze the effect of responsiveness on customer satisfaction levels in selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*
3. To determine the effect of assurance on customer satisfaction of public sector organizations in selected public sector organizations of *soyama zurya woreda*
4. To examine the effect of empathy on customer satisfaction of public sectors organization in selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*
5. To evaluate the effect of the tangibility on customer satisfaction of public sectors organization in selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*
6. To evaluate the effect of transparency on customer satisfaction of selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*

1.5 Hypothesis of the study

1. H1: There is a relationship between tangibles in service quality and customer satisfaction.
2. H2: There is a relationship between responsiveness in service quality and customer satisfaction.
3. H3: There is a relationship between empathy in service quality and customer satisfaction.
4. H4: There is a relationship between assurance in service quality and customer satisfaction.

5. H5: There is a relationship between reliability in service quality and customer satisfaction.
6. H6: There is a relationship between transparency in service quality and customer satisfaction.

1.6 Significance of the study

This research anticipates numerous advantages. Foremost, this study's discoveries will contribute insightful details to the existing knowledge, guiding better informed decisions, and empowering organizations. Further, the investigation attempts to furnish resolutions addressing operational challenges and bolstering strategic planning within public sector institutions. Subsequently, the study will catalyze boosted productivity and usher innovation by highlighting service quality advancements. Then, this work will yield profit to stakeholders by aligning organizational service delivery with customer expectations. Moreover, the research will influence policy amendments through concrete evidence. Finally, it will equip future researchers studying in this subject with rudimentary baseline information which will definitely support and help their studies.

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of this study confined itself to investigating the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda. It covered a population of 384 respondents, including customers of the chosen organizations. Geographically, the study focused on public sector organizations within Soyama Zurya Woreda. The time frame for data collection and analysis extended from July 2024 to January 2025. Methodologically, the study employed descriptive and explanatory research designs, using a quantitative approach to gather and analyze data. The research aimed to achieve specific objectives related to service quality and customer satisfaction in the selected organizations.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This study has significant limitations, which must be acknowledged. To begin, the study's geographical scope was limited to Soyama zurya woreda, which may limit the findings' applicability to other places with various cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the reliance on self-

reported data from employees within selected public organizations introduces the potential for bias, as employees may have been inclined to present a more favorable view of their work environment, either exaggerating positive attributes or downplaying negative aspects. To mitigate this, the study employed careful survey design and cross-checked responses when possible. Furthermore, future study might broaden the geographical reach and include a more diverse sample to improve the findings' robustness and application across other contexts. This multifaceted strategy reduces constraints while increasing the overall validity and dependability of the study's conclusions.

1.9 Operational Definitions

Assurance: Within the scope of this research, it refers to the confidence that customers have in the competence, trustworthiness, and expertise of service providers, influencing their willingness to rely on them.

Customer Satisfaction: In the context of this study, it refers to the positive emotional state that arises from evaluating a service experience, encompassing perceptions of quality, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Empathy: Concerning this investigation, it refers to the ability of service providers to understand and share the feelings of customers, demonstrating a genuine concern for their needs and well-being.

Perceived transparency: Within the framework of this study, it refers to the degree to which customers believe that service providers are open, honest, and communicative in their operations, decision-making processes, and interactions.

Reliability: Relative to this particular inquiry it refers to the ability of a service provider to deliver services consistently and accurately, meeting customers' expectations and maintaining a stable performance over time.

Responsiveness: In the context of this study, it refers to the willingness and ability of service providers to promptly respond to customer inquiries, complaints, and feedback, demonstrating a sense of concern and empathy.

Tangibles: Concerning this investigation, it refers to the physical aspects of service quality, such as the condition and maintenance of facilities, equipment, and amenities that customers perceive as part of their service experience in public sectors in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

1.10 Organization of the paper

The study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction part, which comprises the background of the study, problem statement and justification, basic research questions, objectives of the study, and significance of the study. After this brief introductory chapter, the second chapter starts with the definition of important concepts and terms that lead to a more detailed review of the literature on factors influencing the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction. The third chapter focuses on population and demographic aspects, data collection, and instrument and analysis methods. The fourth chapter is devoted to the results and discussion of the study. The final chapter provides conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter has conducted a literature review that was carried out to identify the key concepts and theories that have been researched in this field and to examine the methodologies employed in previous studies. Additionally, a conceptual framework has been developed, outlining the relationships between service quality and customer satisfaction.

2.1 Overview of Service Quality, and Customer Satisfaction

Service quality hinges on understanding and meeting customer needs and expectations. This fundamental principle necessitates a thorough grasp of customer demographics, motivations, and desired outcomes. By aligning products and services with these aspirations, organizations can foster positive customer experiences and cultivate loyalty (Koli et al., 2019).

At its core, service quality revolves around exceeding customer expectations. This means understanding, anticipating, and fulfilling their needs, even before they articulate them (Herman, 2022). It's not just about delivering a functional service, but about creating a positive and memorable experience that leaves customers feeling valued and satisfied. Service quality is not a one-time event, but a continuous and consistent pursuit. Delivering a high-quality experience requires meticulous attention to detail, standardized procedures, and empowered employees who deliver consistent service, regardless of the situation (Surahman et al., 2020).

Effective service quality relies on empowering employees to take ownership of their roles and make decisions that benefit the customer. This means creating a workplace culture that encourages initiative, problem-solving, and responsiveness (Fida et al., 2020). Service quality goes beyond the tangible aspects of a service. It encompasses the overall experience, including the atmosphere, communication, and the emotional connection customers feel with the service provider (Sinaga et al., 2022).

Service quality is an ongoing process that requires constant evaluation and improvement. Actively seeking customer feedback, conducting surveys, and analyzing data allows organizations to identify areas for improvement and refine their service offerings (Gobena,

2019). Service quality is not just about individual transactions; it's about building long-term relationships with customers.

In the context of a public organization, service quality takes on additional dimensions due to the nature of public services and their impact on the community. Public organizations often serve diverse populations with varied needs and expectations, making it crucial to adopt a holistic approach to service quality. This involves not only efficient service design and delivery but also ensuring transparency, accountability, trust, and inclusiveness. Public organizations must continuously strive to enhance service quality through innovations, stakeholder engagement, and policy adjustments to meet the evolving needs of the public they serve (Cahyono et al., 2023).

2.1.1 Dimensions of Service Quality

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model, in the late 1980s, has significantly shaped the ways firms and government institutions quantify and handle service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). It rests on five crucial dimensions of Service Quality: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which collectively comprise the service encounter as perceived by customers (Mahama & Addai, 2021). These dimensions help organizations understand the areas of their service delivery that influence customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty.

While these five dimensions have been considered historically as the most important elements of service quality, research is increasingly bringing into focus one additional dimension—transparency—in the public sector. The dimension involves open, honest, and clear communication between the providers of services and citizens (Ezé & Akintoye, 2023). Its importance is increasingly mounting, especially in public institutions and government, where citizens demand accountability and transparency while dealing with public institutions.

1. Tangibility

The "Tangibles" factor in the SERVQUAL framework is related to the physical aspects of service delivery, including the look of facilities, staff, and communication materials (Kachwala et al., 2021). For the public sector, tangible features can include the cleanliness and condition of government buildings, the dress code of public officials, and communication materials, including

signs or brochures. Tangibles are the very first interaction the service provider makes with the public at large and are often determinant of the first service quality perceptions. Physical conditions of the resources also reflect the level of professionalism and dedication the firm employs in serving people (Uche, 2019; Akintoye, 2022).

A clean and well-organized public office, for example, can help in creating a good impression and mirroring the effectiveness and professionalism of the service provider. Material aspects play an important role in public organizations in conveying the effectiveness and credibility of the service provider. Physical stimuli, such as the maintenance of government offices and the appearance of staff uniforms, are not only functionally useful but also symbolize the general quality of service (Mahama & Addai, 2021). It has been proven through studies that when citizens interact with clean and welcoming physical environments, they are likely to view public services as effective and reliable (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021). Public institutions that invest in the development of their physical infrastructure enhance the overall reputation of their service delivery and enhance positive public perception (Uche, 2019).

The direct and profound impact of tangible factors on customer satisfaction in public institutions is evident. Studies by Olajide and Ibrahim (2023) confirmed that citizens are more likely to report satisfaction with government services if they feel that the physical environment is clean, modern, and accessible. The presentation of an image of professionalism on the part of government staff and buildings significantly improves the chances of a good customer experience (Akintoyé, 2022). This, in effect, leads to high satisfaction rates, citizen trust, and an increased desire to utilize public services in the future. Furthermore, proper management of physical aspects of service delivery helps to minimize frustrations and creates pride among citizens so that they can feel that they are getting the quality of service that they deserve (Mahama & Addai, 2021).

2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability with which services are provided. In public organizations, services must be delivered as promised, on time, and with minimal errors (Yunita et al., 2022). Whether it is the processing of documents, the disbursement of public benefits, or the management of public infrastructure, reliability ensures that citizens can depend

on the public sector to meet their needs consistently and without delay. In the SERVQUAL model, reliability is viewed as the cornerstone of service quality, as it directly affects how well the service provider lives up to customer expectations (Mahama & Addai, 2021). Public organizations that prioritize reliability signal their commitment to serving citizens efficiently and effectively.

For public organizations, reliability plays a central role in building a reputation for competence and professionalism. When services are consistently delivered without failure or delay, public trust in the institution increases, and citizens are more likely to engage with the organization on an ongoing basis (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023). For example, a public institution that processes social security claims quickly and accurately will be seen as reliable, and citizens will have greater confidence in using its services (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021). In contrast, unreliability in public services can lead to public dissatisfaction, frustration, and even erode trust in the government as a whole (Mahama & Addai, 2021).

The impact of reliability on customer satisfaction in public organizations is significant. Research has shown that when services are reliable, citizens are more likely to express higher satisfaction levels, trust the government, and maintain positive attitudes toward public institutions (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021). On the other hand, reliability failures, such as delays or errors, can result in dissatisfaction and can even lead to disengagement from public services (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023). Citizens who experience reliable service delivery tend to feel valued and respected, which boosts their overall satisfaction with public services and enhances their perception of the institution's effectiveness (Mahama & Addai, 2021).

3. Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the willingness of an organization to assist customers and provide prompt service. It entails how quickly and effectively an organization responds to customer inquiries, problems, or complaints. As observed in various studies, responsiveness is a key determinant of perceived service quality (Oluwadare, 2021). A responsive organization demonstrates attentiveness and prioritizes the needs of its customers, signaling a customer-centric attitude (Gibson, 2022). Furthermore, responsiveness can be seen as an active

commitment to customer well-being, where the organization makes an effort to be accessible and present when needed (Gopalan & Olatunji, 2020).

In public organizations, responsiveness is critical to maintaining a smooth and efficient relationship with the public. Citizens expect prompt responses to their needs, ranging from bureaucratic processes to the resolution of issues or complaints (Adeyanju, 2021). A delay in responding to inquiries or complaints in a public sector organization can lead to frustration and a loss of confidence in the system (Bolarinwa & Eke, 2019). For example, citizens rely on the responsiveness of public health services, and when such services are slow to act or unhelpful, it can have serious consequences on public welfare (Mugenda, 2022). Consequently, responsiveness significantly impacts the reputation of the public organization and its ability to meet citizens' needs (Oluwadare & Obafemi, 2020).

Research has consistently shown that responsiveness has a strong and positive correlation with customer satisfaction, especially in the public sector (Oluwadare, 2021). Timely responses to complaints and inquiries are seen as indicators of high service quality, reinforcing the notion that the organization values its customers and is committed to addressing their concerns (Gibson, 2022). On the other hand, a lack of responsiveness can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction, eroding trust in the organization and its services (Adeyanju & Olatunji, 2022). Thus, responsiveness plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall satisfaction levels of individuals interacting with public institutions (Gopalan & Olatunji, 2020).

4. Assurance

Assurance in the SERVQUAL model is the capacity of service providers to create confidence among customers based on their competence, reliability, and professionalism (Athallah Malik & Muthohar, 2023). For public organizations, assurance includes the competence of public servants, quality of communication offered to citizens, and general professionalism in the delivery of services. Public workers who have confidence in the competence and capability of public workers have a greater likelihood of trusting the organization and its capability to meet their needs (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021). Hence, assurance is critical in underpinning public trust in institutions, especially where there is a need for expert knowledge, like healthcare, education, or legal advice.

In public agencies, assurance is paramount in improving the quality of service through building confidence between the public and the public service agencies. The public expects to interact with knowledgeable and competent staff that are able to provide clear and accurate information (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023). The assurance dimension is of special significance in areas like healthcare, where technical proficiency among service providers directly affects the quality of care (Akintoye, 2022). When public institutions demonstrate high assurance through the use of competent and professional staff, it increases the quality of perceived services and strengthens the citizen-government institution relationship as a whole. Assurance is also essential in eradicating any doubt or skepticism that citizens may have towards the services provided, thus ensuring they are confident in their interactions with the public institution (Uche, 2019).

Assurance has a great impact on customer satisfaction in public organizations. When citizens are aware that public servants have knowledge, integrity, and capability to address their problems, they are also content with overall service delivery (Mahama & Addai, 2021). Public organizations that are capable of instilling citizen trust through the demonstration of expertise and professionalism have higher possibilities of gaining trust and long-term loyalty from citizens (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023). For example, patients treated by highly skilled medical staff are likely to enjoy higher rates of satisfaction with the quality of services (Akintoye, 2022). Furthermore, when the competence of public servants in problem-solving or answering questions is displayed, citizens will likely feel respected and appreciated, thus improving the overall quality of the services (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021).

5. Empathy

In the context of the SERVQUAL model, empathy refers to the level of care, attention, and personalized service that a provider provides to its customers (Afifah and Kurniawati, 2021). It entails understanding and responding to individuals' specific needs and concerns, which frequently go beyond what is strictly necessary to ensure that customers feel valued and cared for. Empathy is especially crucial in public organizations because it helps to humanize interactions and fosters a positive relationship between citizens and service providers. Empathy is essential for offering exceptional service, whether it is through personalized assistance or simply listening to issues (Mahama and Addai, 2021).

In public organizations, empathy is critical to improving service delivery quality. Citizens frequently seek public services during stressful or difficult times, such as when filing for social benefits or gaining access to health care services. The ability of public employees to provide empathic, personalized assistance can change an otherwise impersonal service interaction into one that feels supportive and compassionate. Empathy allows public servants to develop deep relationships with citizens, improving their overall experience with the public sector (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021). As a result, empathy becomes an important tool in ensuring that citizens feel respected, heard, and supported when interacting with public agencies.

Empathy has a significant impact on customer satisfaction in public organizations. When citizens believe that public servants genuinely care about their needs and concerns, their levels of satisfaction rise (Mahama & Addai, 2021). According to research, empathic service providers can reduce irritation and create positive experiences even in difficult situations (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023). For example, in public health care, a healthcare worker who takes the time to listen to a patient's concerns and provides personalized care can make a substantial difference in the patient's overall satisfaction with the service (Akintoye, 2022). Empathy, thus, not only improves the emotional experience of service users but also strengthens the relationship between citizens and public institutions, resulting in higher levels of satisfaction and trust (Fadeyi & Ekundayo, 2021).

6. Transparency

Transparency is an emerging dimension in the SERVQUAL model that refers to an organization's openness, clarity, and honesty while communicating with its stakeholders. Transparency in public organizations entails giving clear information about policies, procedures, and decision-making processes, ensuring that citizens are well-informed about the services they receive (Rachmawati et al., 2020). Transparency also includes holding public servants accountable for their decisions and actions.

Transparency is critical for increasing service quality in public organizations because it fosters trust between citizens and public institutions. Transparent communication assists citizens in understanding how services are provided and what to expect, reducing misunderstandings and potential irritation. A transparent public sector organization is perceived to be accountable,

trustworthy, and open to feedback (Lin et al., 2023). Transparency, according to studies, is essential for maintaining effective governance and increasing the quality of public services. When citizens believe they are informed and included in decision-making, their overall perception of service quality increases.

Transparency has a direct and significant impact on consumer satisfaction in public enterprises. When public institutions operate in a transparent manner, citizens are more likely to trust them, engage with them, and report higher levels of satisfaction. Transparency in government processes, for example, expressing public policies or being open about decision-making procedures, boosts public trust. The resulting pleasure stems from citizens believing that they are treated fairly and that their concerns are addressed in an open and honest manner (Mahama & Addai, 2021). Transparency promotes long-term trust and satisfaction with public services (Olajide & Ibrahim, 2023).

By analyzing the service quality dimensions through the lens of public sector organizations in Burji Zone Soyama Zurya Woreda, the municipality can identify areas for improvement and implement strategies to enhance citizen satisfaction. This requires a holistic approach that addresses both the tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery, fosters a culture of responsiveness and empathy amongst public servants, and actively seeks citizen participation in shaping public services. Through continuous improvement and a commitment to excellence, Soyama Zurya Woreda can build a public sector that effectively serves the needs of its citizens.

2.1.2 Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction, the elusive holy grail of business success, is the emotional response customers have to a product or service, often expressed as a sense of fulfillment or contentment. It is a multi-faceted concept, encompassing feelings of delight, joy, and even indifference, all shaped by individual perceptions and experiences (Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye, 2020). However, quantifying and measuring this emotional response remains a challenge, often relying on subjective metrics like surveys and feedback mechanisms. Despite its complexity, striving for customer satisfaction is essential for any business aiming for long-term success.

Customer expectations, like the opening notes of a symphony, set the stage for the entire experience. They are formed by a myriad of factors, including past experiences, word-of-mouth, marketing materials, and industry benchmarks (Laisak et al., 2021). Customers, with their unique needs and desires, bring their expectations to the table, setting the bar for what they perceive as 'good' or 'bad' service. These expectations, whether implicitly or explicitly stated, guide their satisfaction with a product or service.

Perceived performance, the heart of the symphony, is the experience a customer encounters when interacting with a product or service. It's the tangible reality that resonates with customer expectations. Whether it's the quality of a product, the efficiency of a service, or the responsiveness of a customer support representative, perceived performance dictates how customers evaluate their experience (Sonani & Yulia, 2021). A mismatch between expectations and performance can lead to dissatisfaction, while a harmonious alignment fosters a positive and memorable experience.

Value, the final movement of this symphony, is the customer's subjective perception of the worth they receive compared to what they give. It's not just about price; it encompasses the entire package of benefits, including product quality, service quality, perceived value, and emotional connection (Lukman et al., 2021). Customers seek value for their money and their time, and when they perceive a strong value proposition, their satisfaction levels soar, leaving them feeling both happy and fulfilled.

Customer expectations play a vital role in their satisfaction. If expectations are too high and performance falls short, customers will likely be disappointed (Hadiyati, 2014). Conversely, if expectations are low and performance exceeds them, customers may be pleasantly surprised and highly satisfied. Businesses need to carefully manage customer expectations, setting them realistically and consistently delivering on their promises (Nawaz & Studies, 2021).

Perceived performance is the direct outcome of a customer's interaction with a product or service. It's the tangible evidence that either confirms or refutes their expectations. From the ease of use of a product to the responsiveness of a customer service agent, perceived performance

directly impacts satisfaction levels. Businesses must focus on delivering exemplary performance, and consistently exceeding customer expectations (Paul et al., 2016).

Value is a complex concept that involves a delicate balance between price, perceived benefits, and emotional connection. Customers seek a reasonable price point for the perceived benefits they receive, and they also value the emotional experience associated with the product or service. Businesses need to create a compelling value proposition that satisfies customer needs and desires while remaining competitively priced (Anbari et al., 2018). Customer satisfaction, a complex interplay of expectations, perceived performance, and value, is a critical driver of business success. The concept of customer satisfaction in the public sector adopts a unique perspective. While public sector organizations are not driven by profit, their mission is to serve the public and meet their needs effectively. Their 'customers' are the citizens they serve, and their primary goal is to deliver high-quality public services that meet the expectations of their constituents (Ogbeide et al., 2023). This involves understanding the needs and priorities of the community, ensuring equitable access to services, and delivering services efficiently and effectively.

2.2 Theoretical Reviews

2.2.1 SERVQUAL Model

The SERVQUAL Model is a renowned service quality assessment tool that has found wide spread application in public sector organizations (Parasuraman et al., 1985). This model postulates that service quality is perceived by customers based on five key dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Reliability refers to the consistency and dependability of the service, while responsiveness entails the promptness and willingness to assist customers. Assurance encompasses the credibility, trustworthiness, and knowledge of the service provider. Empathy denotes the personalized attention and emotional understanding shown to customers. Finally, tangibles relate to the physical appearance and condition of the service environment.

Public sector organizations can leverage the SERVQUAL Model to enhance their service delivery by identifying and addressing gaps between perceived and expected service quality. By

conducting surveys and analyzing customer feedback, organizations can determine areas where improvements are needed. For instance, a government department may identify low scores on reliability, highlighting the need for more consistent service delivery. Consequently, they can implement measures such as standardized operating procedures and performance monitoring to improve reliability. Similarly, low scores on empathy may indicate a lack of personalized interactions. This can be addressed through staff training focused on active listening, empathy, and communication skills.

The SERVQUAL Model not only helps in-service assessment but also provides a framework for continuous improvement. By regularly monitoring service quality and identifying areas for enhancement, public sector organizations can proactively meet the evolving needs of citizens. Moreover, the model promotes a customer-centric approach, emphasizing the importance of understanding and meeting the expectations of those they serve. By embracing the SERVQUAL Model, public sector organizations can strive to provide high-quality services that meet or exceed citizen expectations, fostering trust and satisfaction.

2.2.2 Performance Model (SERVPERF)

The (SERVPERF) model is a widely recognized service quality measurement model. It conceptualizes service quality as a customer's perception of the gap between their expectations and actual experiences with a service. SERVPERF utilizes five dimensions to evaluate service performance: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994). These dimensions capture aspects of the service encounter, such as physical facilities, consistency of service delivery, willingness to assist customers, confidence in the service provider, and ability to understand customer needs.

SERVPERF has significant applicability in public sector organizations where customer satisfaction is paramount (Brown & Patterson, 1999). For instance, in government agencies, SERVPERF can assess the efficiency of service delivery, responsiveness to citizen requests, and the professionalism of public servants. In healthcare settings, it can evaluate the quality of care, patient satisfaction, and the accessibility of medical services (Babakus, Parasuraman, & Bowen, 1991). By identifying areas where expectations are not met, public sector organizations can

enhance service processes, improve customer experiences, and foster trust among the service recipients.

Implementing SERVPERF in public sector organizations requires careful consideration of organizational context and customer expectations (Brady & Cronin, 2001). It involves gathering customer feedback through surveys, interviews, or other methods. The data collected is then analyzed to identify areas of discrepancy between expectations and experiences. Based on these findings, service improvement initiatives can be implemented to address specific weaknesses and strengthen service delivery (Gronroos, 2000). By continuously monitoring service quality through SERVPERF, public sector organizations can ensure that their services meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

2.2.3 The Parasuraman GAP model

Parasuraman's Gap model (1985) identifies five gaps between service expectations and perceptions, highlighting areas where service quality can be improved. The first gap, the 'knowledge gap,' measures the difference between what managers believe consumers expect and what consumers expect. The second gap, the 'service design gap,' assesses the difference between what manager's design as the service blueprint and how the service is delivered. (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

Gap three, the 'service performance gap,' evaluates the difference between the quality of the service that is designed and delivered and the standard of service that consumers receive. Gap four, the 'communications gap,' measures the difference between what managers communicate about the service and what consumers understand or expect. The final gap, the 'perceived service quality gap,' represents the discrepancy between the services that consumers received and their overall satisfaction and perception of quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

By applying the Gap Model, public sector organizations can focus on closing the service delivery gaps to improve service quality. This involves: (1) conducting thorough market research to understand citizens' expectations; (2) establishing clear service standards and performance indicators; (3) investing in employee training and development to improve service skills; (4) fostering effective communication channels with citizens; and (5) continuously monitoring and

evaluating service quality to identify areas for improvement. By addressing these issues, public sector organizations can build trust, enhance citizen satisfaction, and improve the effectiveness of public services.

2.2.4 Expectation Confirmation Theory

The Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) postulates that service quality is determined by the comparison between customers' expectations and their actual experiences (Oliver, 1980). Consequently, public sector organizations must manage customer expectations effectively. They can achieve this clarity by communicating service standards transparently, setting realistic expectations, and actively seeking feedback from citizens. Understanding the dissonance between expectations and perceptions enables organizations to identify areas for improvement and enhance citizen satisfaction.

ECT emphasizes the importance of service encounters in shaping customer perceptions (Bitner, 1990). In public sector contexts, these encounters often involve interactions between citizens and frontline staff. Therefore, training and empowering frontline staff to deliver excellent service is crucial. By ensuring employees are courteous, responsive, and knowledgeable, organizations can create positive service experiences that exceed expectations and build strong relationships with citizens.

The SERVQUAL model, an extension of ECT, identifies five key dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Public sector organizations can use this framework to assess their service quality and pinpoint areas where they need to improve. For instance, they can evaluate the reliability of their services by analyzing consistency and accuracy, while empathy can be measured by assessing the extent to which staff are compassionate and understanding. By focusing on these dimensions, organizations can systematically enhance the quality of their services and foster citizen trust and loyalty.

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical review focuses on examining existing studies related to service quality and customer satisfaction within public sectors. This section synthesizes findings from previous research to understand how service quality dimensions influence customer satisfaction, particularly in the context of public sector organizations. It draws from studies conducted in various regions, including Sub-Saharan Africa and Ethiopia, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

2.3.1 Global Studies on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Global studies on service quality and customer satisfaction reveal a diverse range of factors influencing these dimensions across different regions. In Canada, a study by Williams and Smith (2021) explored the impact of service quality in public sector institutions, focusing on the healthcare sector. Their research highlighted that dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance significantly affect customer satisfaction. The study found that Canadian healthcare institutions excel in responsiveness and assurance but face challenges in maintaining consistent reliability due to resource constraints. This emphasizes the importance of balancing various service quality dimensions to ensure overall customer satisfaction in public sector services (Williams & Smith, 2021).

In Brazil, Silva and Oliveira (2020) conducted an empirical study on service quality in public transportation systems. Their research identified unique factors such as system congestion and service frequency as critical determinants of customer satisfaction. The study revealed that while Brazilian public transportation services are generally perceived as reliable, issues related to system congestion and inconsistent service frequency negatively impact customer satisfaction. The authors recommended strategic improvements in scheduling and infrastructure to enhance service quality and address customer concerns (Silva & Oliveira, 2020).

A comprehensive study by Naeem et al., (2021) in China examined the service quality of public sector utilities, including water and electricity services. The study highlighted the importance of tangibles and reliability in shaping customer perceptions. Zhang and Chen found that while Chinese public utilities generally offer reliable services, there are significant gaps in the physical

infrastructure and customer service interactions. Their findings suggest that addressing these gaps through infrastructure investments and improved customer service training is crucial for enhancing service quality and customer satisfaction in China's public sector (Zhang & Chen, 2022).

In Pakistan, Khan and Ahmed (2019) investigated the service quality of public educational institutions, focusing on dimensions such as empathy and assurance. The study found that while Pakistani public schools exhibit strong empathy towards students, issues related to assurance and infrastructure detract from overall service quality. Khan and Ahmed argued that improving physical facilities and ensuring consistent service delivery would significantly enhance customer satisfaction in the educational sector. Their study underscores the need for targeted interventions to address specific service quality dimensions (Khan & Ahmed, 2019).

In Indonesia, Setiawan and Putra (2021) conducted a study on service quality in public health services. Their research highlighted the role of responsiveness and tangibles in influencing customer satisfaction. The study found that Indonesian public health services struggle with responsiveness due to high patient volumes and limited resources, which affects customer satisfaction. The authors recommended implementing better resource management and improving the physical environment of healthcare facilities to enhance service quality and meet customer expectations (Setiawan & Putra, 2021).

Common themes across these global studies include the critical role of reliability, responsiveness, and assurance in determining customer satisfaction, although specific factors vary by region. While Canadian and Chinese studies emphasize reliability and assurance, Brazilian and Indonesian studies highlight issues related to system congestion and responsiveness. These studies collectively suggest that improving service quality requires a multifaceted approach, addressing both tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery. For public sector management, the implications are clear: targeted improvements in infrastructure, resource management, and service delivery processes are essential for enhancing customer satisfaction across diverse public sector services.

2.3.2 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Sub-Saharan Africa

Empirical studies on service quality and customer satisfaction in Sub-Saharan Africa reveal diverse regional challenges and opportunities. In Angola, Nteere (2023) examined public healthcare service quality, identifying infrastructural deficiencies and staff shortages as critical factors reducing customer satisfaction. Their findings underscore the importance of robust government investment in healthcare infrastructure and human resources to enhance service quality. The study highlights how these deficiencies adversely impact patient perceptions and satisfaction levels, suggesting a need for policy interventions focused on infrastructure development and workforce enhancement (Chimbwanda & Lopes, 2019).

In Cameroon, Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye (2020) explored service quality in the public transportation sector, emphasizing the reliability and safety of services. The study found that frequent service disruptions and safety concerns significantly reduce customer satisfaction. The authors recommend improving transportation schedules and safety protocols to address these issues. This study highlights the critical role of reliable and safe transportation services in maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction, particularly in a context where transportation infrastructure is often underdeveloped.

Research by Ojo (2024) in the Republic of the Congo focused on public utility services, specifically water supply. The study revealed that the reliability of the water supply and the responsiveness of service providers are major determinants of customer satisfaction. Frequent water supply interruptions and slow response times to service requests negatively impacted customer perceptions. The authors suggest implementing better infrastructure maintenance practices and enhancing customer service training to improve responsiveness and reliability in public utilities (Mbemba & Ekamba, 2021).

In Kenya, Mwaura and Nyaga (2020) conducted an empirical study on service quality in public educational institutions. The study found that dimensions such as assurance and empathy significantly affect customer satisfaction. Kenyan public schools that demonstrated high levels of assurance and empathy towards students were more likely to have satisfied customers. The authors argue for the importance of fostering a supportive and confident learning environment,

alongside continuous professional development for teachers to enhance these service quality dimensions.

Okechukwu and Ndubuisi (2021) explored service quality in Nigerian public health services, focusing on tangibles and reliability. The study identified outdated facilities and inconsistent service delivery as major barriers to customer satisfaction. The authors recommend investing in modern healthcare infrastructure and implementing reliable service delivery frameworks. Their findings emphasize the necessity of addressing both physical and operational aspects to improve service quality and meet customer expectations effectively (Okechukwu & Ndubuisi, 2021).

Across these studies, common themes include the critical importance of infrastructure, reliability, and responsiveness in shaping customer satisfaction. Divergent findings often relate to the specific contextual challenges of each country, such as safety concerns in Cameroon's transportation sector versus infrastructural deficiencies in Angola's healthcare system. However, all studies concur on the need for targeted government interventions and investments to address service quality deficiencies. The implications for public sector management in Sub-Saharan Africa are clear: policymakers must prioritize infrastructure development, enhance service delivery reliability, and improve responsiveness to customer needs. By addressing these critical areas, public sector managers can significantly improve service quality and customer satisfaction, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of public services in the region.

2.3.3 Empirical Review of Existing Studies in Public Sectors of Ethiopia

The empirical reviews of existing studies on service quality in the public sectors of Ethiopia have yielded valuable insights into the performance of public services in the country.

The first study (Sharecho & Raghava, 2022) investigates the reliability and responsiveness of service delivery in public health institutions in Addis Ababa. The authors found that reliability defined as the ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately, significantly influences customer satisfaction. Responsiveness, characterized by the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, also emerged as a critical determinant. Their findings underscore the necessity for public institutions to prioritize these dimensions to enhance service quality and customer satisfaction.

The second article by Woldemichael (2024) focuses on assurance and empathy within public educational services in the Amhara region. Assurance involves the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy, on the other hand, relates to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers. The study reveals that both assurance and empathy are pivotal in shaping customer perceptions of service quality. The authors argue that public educational institutions need to foster a culture of assurance and empathy to improve satisfaction levels among service users. This entails continuous training for staff and a focus on customer-centric service delivery models.

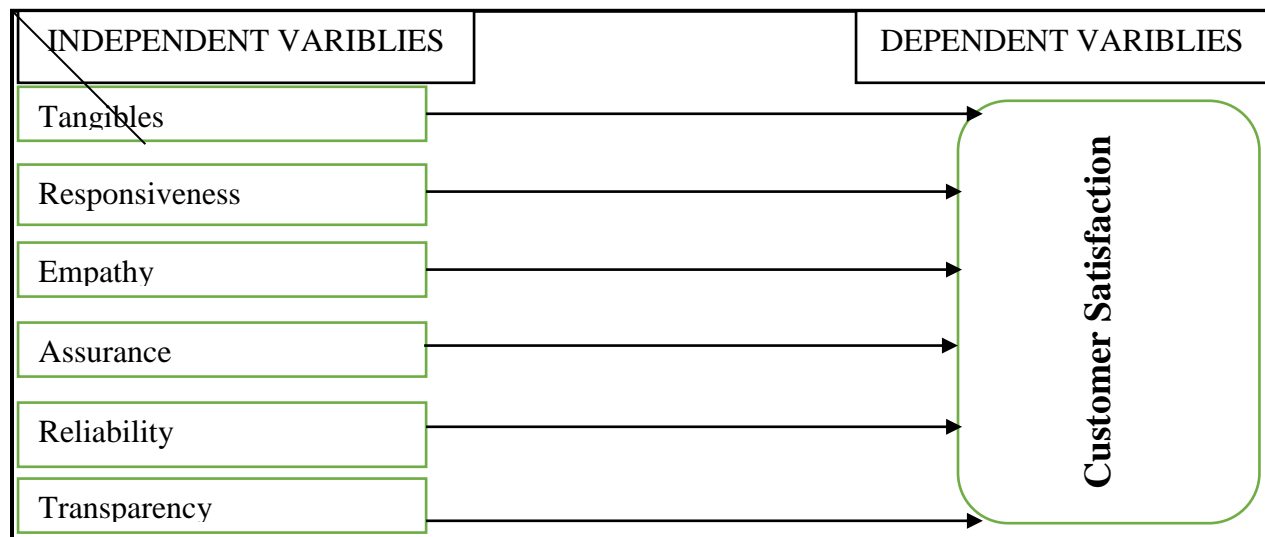
The third study by Tadesse & Yohannes (2019) examines the tangibles dimension in public transportation services in the Oromia region. Tangibles refer to the physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel. The research highlights that tangible aspects significantly affect customer satisfaction, as they provide the first impression of the service quality. The study recommends that public transportation authority's invest in modernizing infrastructure and maintaining clean and well-presented facilities to meet customer expectations. By improving the tangibles, public transportation services can enhance their overall service quality perception and satisfaction levels.

These studies collectively suggest that various dimensions of service quality—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles—play crucial roles in determining customer satisfaction within Ethiopian public sectors. The findings point to several policy implications, including the need for regular training programs to improve staff competence, customer-oriented service delivery approaches, and investments in physical infrastructure. Implementing these recommendations could lead to significant improvements in service quality and customer satisfaction, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of public sector services in Ethiopia.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is the foundation upon which a study is built (Saunders et al., 2016). It provides the structure and guidance for the study, and it includes the definition of the terms used, the identification of the variables, and the development of the hypotheses. The conceptual framework also serves to link the study to previous research and theory, and it helps to ensure that the study is methodologically sound.

Figures 2. 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source; Adopted from Parasuraman et al. (1988), and Zeithaml et al. (2000) modified by the researcher

The conceptual framework of this study draws upon the objectives of this study, which are to investigate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in the public sector. The theoretical and empirical evidence presented in the literature review suggests that several factors contribute to service quality, including tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 2000). These factors are known as the SERVQUAL dimensions. The study will use these dimensions to measure service quality and will examine their effect on customer satisfaction.

This study's comprehensive analysis has uncovered a set of crucial independent variables that have a profound impact on Customer Satisfaction, including tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and perceived transparency. These variables are hypothesized to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable of Customer Satisfaction, and the present study has developed specific hypotheses to explore and test these relationships.

H1: There is a relationship between tangibles in service quality and customer satisfaction

Tangibles, a key element of service quality, encompass the physical aspects of a service encounter, including the environment, equipment, and personnel appearance (Sinaga et al.,

2022). These tangibles directly impact customer satisfaction, as they create an initial impression and communicate the perceived value of the service (Gobena, 2019). For instance, a clean and organized office space with well-dressed staff can enhance the customer's positive experience and satisfaction, whereas a cluttered environment with poorly dressed staff may detract from the service perception (Yunita et al., 2022). Therefore, we hypothesize that there is a positive relationship between tangibles and customer satisfaction, suggesting that as the perceived quality of tangibles increases, customer satisfaction will also increase.

H2: There is a relationship between responsiveness in service quality and customer satisfaction

Responsiveness, a key dimension of service quality, plays a significant role in driving customer satisfaction (Nurcahaya et al., 2022). It refers to the willingness and ability of service providers to promptly and efficiently respond to customer needs and requests (Cahyono et al., 2023). This responsiveness fosters a sense of value and appreciation in customers, leading to higher satisfaction levels (Suharto & Sulistiyono, 2015). Therefore, it is hypothesized that there is a positive and significant relationship between service quality, specifically responsiveness, and customer satisfaction, meaning that as responsiveness increases, customer satisfaction will also increase.

H3: There is a relationship between empathy in service quality and customer satisfaction.

Empathy, the ability to understand and share the emotions of others Fida et al. (2020), plays a crucial role in customer satisfaction. Studies suggest that empathetic employees exhibit higher levels of customer attentiveness, responsiveness, and understanding (Rachmawati et al., 2020). This emotional connection leads to improved communication and problem-solving (Joshy et al., 2020). By understanding the customer's perspective and emotional state, empathetic employees can tailor their interactions and provide more satisfying experiences. Therefore, we hypothesize a positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction, suggesting that higher levels of empathy among employees lead to higher levels of customer satisfaction.

H4: There is a relationship between assurance in service quality and customer satisfaction.

Assurance, a key dimension of service quality, plays a crucial role in fostering customer satisfaction (Athallah Malik & Muthohar, 2023). This dimension reflects the customer's trust and

confidence in the service provider's ability to perform the service reliably and competently. A strong assurance fosters a sense of security and reliability, leading to increased trust in the service provider. This trust, in turn, translates into higher customer satisfaction as customers are more likely to be satisfied with a service they believe will be delivered with competence and skill (Yunita et al., 2022). Therefore, it is hypothesized that a positive relationship exists between service quality, specifically the dimension of assurance, and customer satisfaction, suggesting that higher levels of assurance lead to increased customer satisfaction.

H5: There is a relationship between reliability in service quality and customer satisfaction.

Reliability, a key aspect of service quality, plays a crucial role in fostering customer satisfaction. When customers can consistently rely on a service to meet their expectations and deliver as promised, they are more likely to experience positive emotions, such as trust and loyalty (Nurcahaya et al., 2022). This enhanced customer satisfaction, in turn, can lead to favorable outcomes for businesses, including increased repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth marketing, and reduced customer churn (Hadiyati, 2014). Based on this understanding, it is hypothesized that service reliability has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction, whereby higher levels of reliability are associated with greater customer contentment and loyalty.

H6: There is a relationship between transparency in service quality and customer satisfaction.

Perceived transparency is a crucial factor in shaping customer satisfaction. When customers perceive a company as being transparent, they develop trust and a positive attitude towards the brand (Ogbeide et al., 2023). This trust translates into increased satisfaction and loyalty, as customers feel valued and respected. Moreover, transparency fosters open communication and empowers customers to make informed decisions (Ahmad Farhani, 2023). Therefore, it is hypothesized that there is a positive relationship between perceived transparency and customer satisfaction. This hypothesis suggests that as perceived transparency increases, customer satisfaction will also increase.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presented an overview of the research design and methodology employed to investigate the research problem. Consequently, the research design, sample selection, and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and statistical tools utilized for data processing and analysis were thoroughly discussed.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

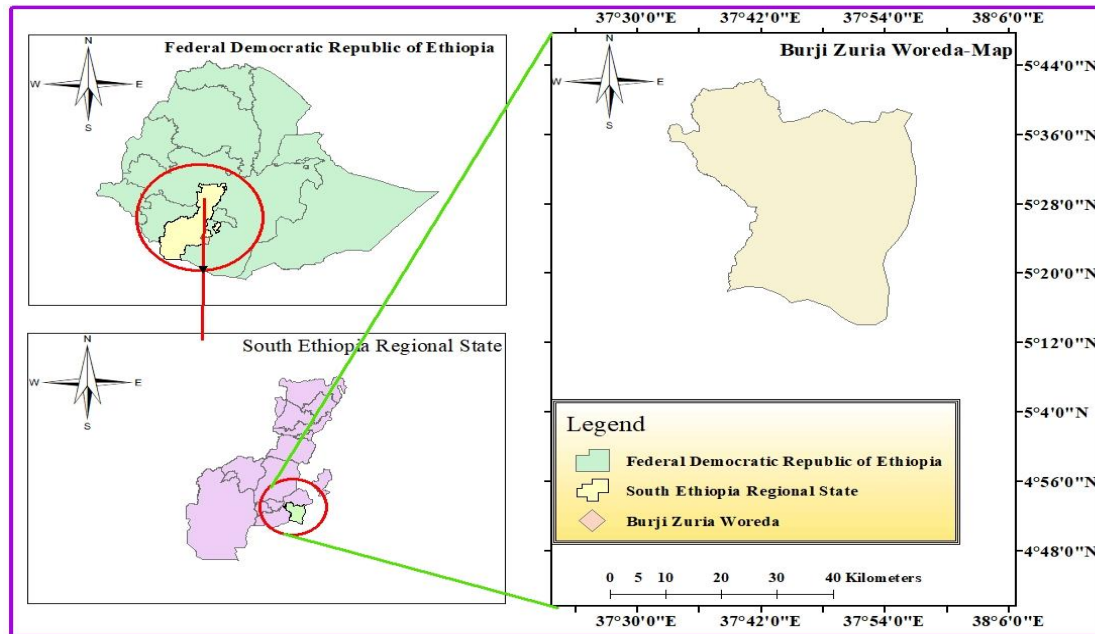
The study is located in Burji zone, Soyama zurya woreda, in southern Ethiopia. Geographically it was located between 5°29' 59.99" N latitudes and 37°49' 59.99" E longitudes, has a significant range in altitude, from 801 to 2560 meters above sea level (m.a.s.l) (Shibru, 2017). The district was bounded to the east and south by the Oromia region, to the west by the Konso zone, and to the south by the Kore Zone. Its agro-ecological features have historically been classified into three distinct zones: highland, midland, and lowland, which account for 14%, 46%, and 40% of the district, respectively. Annual rainfall ranges from 800mm to 1000mm, and average temperatures range from 15.10°C to 27.5°C (BOARD, 2011).

The study location is 562 kilometers away from Addis Ababa, capital city of Ethiopia and 310 km from Wolaita Sodo, Administrative center of south Ethiopia government. The Public organizations in this area play a vital role in providing essential services such as health care, education, and social support. The decision to use this district as the research environment was justified by the compelling need to investigate the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the public sector. The government's major engagement in this region makes it a compelling case study.

Residents of Soyama Zurya Woreda were active participants in many public services, which influenced their levels of satisfaction with public institutions. Interactions with local administrative bodies were recorded in the study, revealing details about service consistency as well as response times. The research was designed to measure the effectiveness of service delivery mechanisms by carefully evaluating the extent to which these organizations met residents' requirements. This study concluded with important recommendations for improving

management processes to better serve the community. The need to improve understanding of local government was also taken into account, ensuring that performance may be improved and citizen satisfaction promoted.

Figures 3. 1: The Study Area Map



Source; Developed by Researcher (2024).

3.2 Research Design

The chosen research design serves as the foundation for any inquiry. The research design, as articulated by Adams et al. (2018), served as a meticulous blueprint that guided the data collection and analysis process. This investigation used descriptive and explanatory research designs. A comprehensive perspective was deemed necessary to adequately comprehend the complex interconnection between service quality and customer satisfaction among the selected public sector Organizations.

Initially, the descriptive design was used to generate a detailed account of service quality attributes in public sectors. This strategy, as supported by Beins and McCarthy (2017), served as a method for carefully describing and inquiring about the characteristics of a certain population or phenomenon. Simultaneously, guided by (Kothari, 2017), the explanatory design was used to

investigate causal relationships between selected variables. As a result, the study aimed to determine how independent variables such as tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency influenced the dependent variable of customer satisfaction. These independent variables were examined to determine the magnitude of their influence on the final dependent variable. This overall design was deemed critical to ensuring that the research reached a meaningful and valid conclusion.

3.3 Research Approach

The investigation of the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction used a quantitative research strategy that adhered to established methodological principles. The reasoning for this decision was firmly based on the need for empirical evidence and statistical rigor. As defined by Creswell (2018), this approach used numerical data that was then subjected to statistical analysis. Such structured analysis enabled objective hypothesis testing and the extraction of meaningful results. In this context, the quantitative method made it easier to measure specific variables, such as different dimensions of service quality and levels of customer satisfaction among residents.

3.4 Sampling Design

The sampling design, which is an important component of rigorous research, provided the fundamental structure for obtaining a representative sample from a defined population. This research used certain methods and procedures outlined by Kothari (2004), allowing for the selection of appropriate items for this study. Before beginning any data collection, a clear structure was established. This framework included details about the target population, the sample size, and the sampling approach chosen; hence, a systematic path to gathering data for the study was guaranteed.

3.4.1 Target Population

Identification of the target population was considered fundamental to the research design and served as the foundation for all subsequent analyses. This population, defined as all individuals to whom the researchers intended to make certain inferences, was central to the work's purpose (Marczyk et al., 2005).

This study focuses on customers who interacted with selected public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda, Burji Zone of southern Ethiopia. For the purposes of this investigation, each customer who interacted with the eleven different public sectors throughout the 2023/2024 period needed to be included in the study's broader target group. The estimated number of customers served reached 3,089, reflecting the increased need for better, higher-quality services at these sites (Burji Zone Soyoma Zurya Woreda Administration, 2024).

Table 3. 1: Total number of customers in each public sector

| No | Public sectors | Customers | Proportion to the population |
|-------|--|-----------|------------------------------|
| 1 | Office of Justice | 143 | 4.7% |
| 2 | Court office | 136 | 4.4% |
| 3 | Police Office | 238 | 7.7% |
| 4 | Finance Office | 338 | 10.9% |
| 5 | Youth and Sports Office | 151 | 4.9% |
| 6 | Office of Women and Children Affairs | 153 | 5.0% |
| 7 | Trade and Market Development Office | 343 | 11.1% |
| 8 | Enterprise and Industry Development Office | 438 | 14.2% |
| 9 | Schools Office | 515 | 16.7% |
| 10 | Culture and Tourism Office | 148 | 4.8% |
| 11 | Health Office | 484 | 15.7% |
| Total | | 3089 | 100% |

Source: Soyama Zurya Woreda HR office third Quarter report for the year ended 2023

Table 3.1 depicts the distribution of customers across several departments, and substantial differences were observed. The Justice Sector was represented by 4.7%, the Court by 4.4%, and the Police Office by 7.7%, while the Finance Office accounted for 10.9% of the total. Youth and Sports were represented by 4.9%, Women and Children's Affairs by 5.0%, Trade and Market Development by 11.1%, and Enterprise and Industry Development by 14.2%. Furthermore, the Schools Office accounted for 16.7% of the total, the Culture and Tourism Office for 4.8% and

the Health Office made up the 15.7%. To ensure proportional representation from each sector, the sample was collected using proportional random sampling techniques.

3.4.2 Determining Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of participants or observations selected from a larger population for research purposes. Determining the correct sample size is essential to ensure accurate and reliable results. Since the population of this study exceeds 400, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula, as recommended by researchers like (Author, 2022). Cochran's formula is particularly beneficial when the population size is large, and it ensures that the sample represents the entire population accurately. This methodology helps achieve statistical validity and minimizes sampling error, contributing to the study's overall integrity.

$$n_o = \frac{Z^2 * p * (1-p)}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.5 * (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384$$

Where:

- n_0 = initial sample size
- Z = Z-score (based on the desired confidence level, e.g., 1.96 for 95% confidence)
- p = estimated proportion of the population (use 0.5 for maximum variability if unknown)
- e = margin of error (expressed as a decimal, e.g., 0.05 for $\pm 5\%$)

Thus, a sample size of 384 respondents was chosen customers of selected public sectors in soyama zurya woreda from the total population of 3089. This sample size is based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% sampling error, ensuring the study's findings are both statistically significant and representative of soyama zurya woreda's selected public sector organizations customers.

3.4.3 Sampling Technique

The researchers valued methodical sampling greatly for their crucial investigation. After they calculated the sample size, choosing the right participants became paramount. They opted for probability sampling and implemented stratified sampling, providing every member of the population a known chance of selection. This system ensured fair representation of all viewpoints across the surveyed public organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda, reinforcing

impartiality and mitigating potential selection biases. This commitment to rigorous methods strengthens the credibility of the findings.

Research populations were determined to be heterogeneous; to employed stratified sampling was frequently preferred. Both Kothari (2004) and Selltitz (1962) emphasized the efficacy of this method. The procedure entailed segmenting the larger population into discrete sub-groups, or strata, in order to capture the unique characteristics represented within each. To achieve proportional representation across all strata, a stratified sampling formula was implemented.

$$n_h = \frac{N_h}{N} * n$$

Where; n_h is the sample size for stratum, meaning respective sectors; N_h is the population size for stratum, meaning respective sectors; N is the total population size; n is the total sample size.

Table 3. 2: Determination of sample size by public sectors

| No | Public sectors | Nh | nh |
|-------|--|------|-----|
| 1 | Justice Sector | 143 | 18 |
| 2 | Court | 136 | 17 |
| 3 | Police Office | 238 | 30 |
| 4 | Finance Office | 338 | 42 |
| 5 | Youth and Sports Office | 151 | 19 |
| 6 | Office of Women and Children Affairs | 153 | 19 |
| 7 | Trade and Market Development Office | 343 | 43 |
| 8 | Enterprise and Industry Development Office | 438 | 54 |
| 9 | Schools Office | 515 | 64 |
| 10 | Culture and Tourism Office | 148 | 18 |
| 11 | Health Office | 484 | 60 |
| Total | | 3089 | 384 |

Source: Own computation based on the Woreda HR office third Quarter report for the year ended 2023 data.

The total population for this study was 3,084 people from the identified public sectors. To maintain impartiality, each department was treated as a separate stratum. This stratification provided a finer-grained perspective on the various entities involved, including court bodies, police units, and health facilities, among others. Such a foundation paved the way for accurate reporting in the final results (findings).

3.5 Type and Sources of Data

The investigation incorporated both primary and secondary data. Primary data were harvested through carefully structured surveys directly engaging service users to illuminate their lived experiences and perceived levels of satisfaction; this approach served to capture authentic, firsthand perspectives. Conversely, secondary data, including governmental publications, established sector studies, and previous academic inquiries. The data focused on tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency which will be hypothesized to influence customer satisfaction.

3.6 Time Horizon of the Collection Data

The temporal boundaries within which data was procured held substantial sway over the very nature of the research. As Saunders et al. (2012) illuminated, studies diverge significantly in their temporal approach, either capturing a single moment (cross-sectional) or tracking developments across an extended duration (longitudinal). This specific investigation elected a cross-sectional methodology, which subsequently dictated that data acquisition occurred at one solitary juncture. We sought an immediate, photographic view of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, thus eschewing observation of their evolution across time. This methodological choice, while providing a distinct perspective, purposefully limited the capacity to discern developmental patterns.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Within social science investigations, a variety of data collection instruments were established with the goal of collecting insights, with questionnaires, interviews, and observations being among the most often used methods (Cooper & Schindler, 2007). For this specific research, structured questionnaires were used as the major method for gathering primary data. The design

of these questions was carefully considered, ensuring that each question addressed the objectives, research questions, and hypotheses that were first stated.

A five-point Likert scale was used as the evaluation metric, which is known for its ability to effectively measure the intensity of a subject's agreement or disagreement (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The reliability of the five-point Likert scale, which provided a more diverse range of responses, was also noted (Kothari, 2009). The deliberate selection of questions was influenced by their ability to provide respondents with autonomy in presenting their views with a clear sense of objectivity.

In this case, the question was divided into three separate parts. Part I includes questions designed to elicit the respondents' demographics and individual characteristics. Part II set of questions aims to collect data on service quality variables. Finally, Part III consisted of questions assessing the level of customer satisfactions. All service quality questions were prepared using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Similarly, customer satisfaction was measured using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating Not-satisfied and 5 indicating extreme satisfaction, allowing participants to indicate their level of agreement with the given statistics.

3.8 Reliability and Validity Checks

Before the major data collection began, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test. This preliminary investigation was critical since it enabled the verification of the instrument's reliability and validity. According to Saunders et al. (2009), a pilot study served as preparation for the final research, ensuring that appropriate data collection procedures were used. Sekaran (2003) went on to say that a pilot test refined the questions such that respondents were not hampered in answering them and the data recording was not problematic. Following that, pilot testing was carried out to ensure the correctness of the design and the appropriateness of the measuring instruments, as well as to provide proxy data for probability sample selection (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). Forty-five customers were asked to participate and assess if the questions were clear and applicable.

3.8.1 Validity Test of the Questionnaire

Validity in research refers to how well the data collected corresponds to the intended area of investigation (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). It ensures that measurements accurately reflect what they are intended to measure (Field, 2005). To improve the content validity of the questionnaire, the researcher talks extensively with advisors, supervisors, and academic experts. Their collective experience informs the refinement of the research topic definition, determination of appropriate measurement items, and scale selection. During this judgmental process, the instrument undergoes thorough evaluation to ensure that it effectively encompasses the scope of the investigation.

3.8.2 Reliability Test of the Questionnaire

Cooper and Schindler (2006) defined reliability as "a characteristic of measurement concerned with accuracy, precision, and consistency." An analysis of the study's reliability confirmed data accuracy ensured that the data collection mechanism was not compromised, and established that the questions were consistent across respondents. It was critical that the study's findings were credible, ensuring that they had commercial relevance or met scholarly objectives. According to Sekaran (2003), a questionnaire's reliability is reflected in how well it measures what it aims to quantify.

The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of a multi-item measurement scale as a reliability test (Sekaran, 2003). The Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient ranging from 0 to 1, measured the test items' internal consistency (homogeneity) or correlation. A reliable test assessed a wide range of aspects of the measured characteristic. George and Mallery (2003) established the following criteria: >.9 Excellent, >.8 Good, >.7 Acceptable, >.6 Questionable, >.5 Poor, and <.5 Unacceptable.

Table 3. 3: Reliability test using Cronbach alpha

| Item | Number of items | Cronbach's Alpha | Internal consistency |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Tangibility | 6 | 0.775 | Acceptable |
| Responsiveness | 6 | 0.767 | Acceptable |
| Empathy | 6 | 0.743 | Acceptable |
| Assurance | 6 | 0.735 | Acceptable |
| Reliability | 6 | 0.700 | Acceptable |
| Transparency | 6 | 0.787 | Acceptable |
| Customer satisfaction | 6 | 0.734 | Acceptable |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

The study found that the calculated Cronbach's Alpha coefficients across all dimensions registered are significantly higher than the threshold of 0.7. The lowest Alpha value that was recorded (for Reliability) stood at 0.700, while the greatest one (for transparency) was 0.787. This finding implied that all measurements achieved internal consistency.

3.9 Methods of data analysis

The data analysis process, as outlined by Kothari (2004), served as the foundation for drawing reliable findings for this study. Statistical validity was prioritized; hence the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26 was used for rigorous data manipulation. Before computation, all variables are subjected to meticulous coding procedures. The first phase entailed a detailed descriptive statistical analysis of demographic parameters such as gender, age, education, work experience, economic activity, reason for engaging, and frequency of using service. Following that, Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to examine the relationships between independent and dependent variables; multilinear regression analysis was also used to identify key drivers of customer satisfaction.

3.9.1 Descriptive analysis

This research conducted a comprehensive descriptive statistical study, concentrating on demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, economic activity, reason for engaging, and frequency of service use. These aspects were closely examined in order to acquire a better understanding of the participant profiles. Furthermore, the mean and standard deviation scores for each variable were calculated, evaluated, and contrasted based on the responses of the respondents. The comparison of these descriptive statistics provided a basis for subsequent correlational and regression analyses.

3.9.2 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

The strength and direction of relationships between variables were measured through Pearson's correlation coefficient, a robust parametric technique. This method, as Andy (2006) illuminated, is particularly suited for variables distributed along interval or ratio scales. Consequently, this research adopted this method to measure the association between the various service quality dimensions—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency—and overall customer satisfaction within the chosen public sector organizations. The magnitude and significance of these correlations were then rigorously assessed.

3.9.3 Multiple regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis served as the critical mechanism for examining the nuanced interplay between independent variable and dependent variable, which was validated by Kotari (2004) and Julie (2005). This sophisticated method enabled the researcher to simultaneously explore the extent to which the identified independent variables (service quality) could predict the level of customer satisfaction. This method also allowed for the examination of the effect of each service quality dimension on variations in customer satisfaction within the context of public sector organizations.

3.10 Model Specification

The linear regression model, which is frequently represented by ordinary least squares, has been established as a foundational analytical technique within social sciences, as demonstrated by Cleary and Angel (1984). It was discovered that the foundation of many statistical analyses in these fields is built on linear models, namely attempting to fit a linear relationship to observed data. The standard least squares method, in instance, was used to predict a function that linked a single dependent variable, in this case, customer satisfaction, to one or more independent variables. As a result, a multilinear regression model was chosen for this investigation; it was tested as a function capable of representing the complex interplay between the selected variables. The regression model can be represented as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + e$$

Where:

- Y = Customer Satisfaction
- β_0 = intercept
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$ and β_6 = coefficient of
- X_1 = Responsiveness
- X_2 = Assurance
- X_3 = Tangibility
- X_4 = Transparency
- X_5 = Empathy
- X_6 = Reliability
- e = error term

Multiple linear regressions were used to better understand the nature of the identified links. Customer satisfaction, which served as the dependent variable, was tested against a predetermined linear combination of independent variables. Contributing elements were service quality dimensions such as tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency. The interrelationship between these identified independent variables and customer

satisfaction was investigated using the multilinear regression methodology, which provided a solid analytical framework.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research process. The organization's confidentiality was protected, and all responders' anonymity was strictly maintained. Prior to data collection, permissions were obtained through extensive discussions with participants. The researcher acknowledged the sensitive nature of the material gathered, which resulted in a commitment to protect the privacy of all participants. These steps were taken to ensure that the study was ethically and responsibly carried out.

Furthermore, a confidential statement was included on the survey's front page, informing participants about the study's purpose and commitment to ethical practices. The lack of identifying markers on the questionnaires guaranteed participant confidentiality, and the collected data was treated as confidential. Notably, the researcher made it clear that participation was entirely voluntary and that response would not be used for unrelated purposes. This study's ethical foundation was based on respect for participant autonomy and responsible management of sensitive information.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the data collected from the respondents were analyzed, presented, and interpreted to study the variables. The first part of this section focuses on detailing the questionnaire respondent rate, and the background characteristics of respondents. Subsequently, descriptive and correlation analysis and regression analysis were conducted on the variables, yielding significant insights. Finally, the results were discussed, providing a comprehensive overview of the findings and their implications.

4.1 Questionnaire Respondent Rate

The distribution of 384 questionnaires to customers within the chosen public sector organizations initiated the data collection process. A total of 322 questionnaires were returned. However, the remaining 52 questionnaires were not returned due to various reasons including incomplete responses and late submissions. This yielded an impressive return rate of 83.85%. Significantly, this rate far surpassed the threshold of 70%, an acceptable benchmark advocated by Rubin and Babbie (2010), thereby solidifying the dataset as adequate and reliable for subsequent analysis and interpretation for this essential research study.

4.1 Background Information of Respondents

This section delves into the background information of respondents, a significant step taken to provide a comprehensive picture of the population under study. Such information was considered essential for a robust understanding of the behavioral patterns linked to the study's subject matter.

4.1.1 The Gender Distribution of the Respondents

The investigation into the gender distribution of respondents revealed valuable insights into the demographic composition of the customer base within selected public sector organizations. According to table 4.1, out of 322 respondents, a significant majority of 216 (67.1%) were male, while 106 (32.9%) were female. This indicates a predominant male presence among the customers in the organizations under study, reflecting a notable gender disparity in engagement with public sector services. Therefore, the gender analysis highlighted a clear trend in the male dominated nature of the customer base.

Table 4. 1: The Gender Distribution of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Male | 216 | 67.1 | 67.1 | 67.1 |
| | Female | 106 | 32.9 | 32.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.1.2 The Age Ranges of the Respondents

In addition to gender, the study also examined the respondents' age range to better understand the demographic profile of the customers. As seen in table 4.2, the data showed that 32 respondents (9.9%) were below 30 years of age, 84 (26.1%) were in the 31-40 years of Age, 94 (29.2%) were between 41 and 50, 97 (30.1%) were within the 51-60 range, and 15 (4.7%) were over the age of 60. The findings suggest that the majority of the customers of the public sector organizations were middle-aged, with the largest segment falling within the 51-60 age range. This distribution offers valuable insight into the age demographics of those interacting with these services.

Table 4. 2: The Age Ranges of the Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Under 30 years | 32 | 9.9 | 9.9 | 9.9 |
| | 31-40 years | 84 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 36.0 |
| | 41-50 years | 94 | 29.2 | 29.2 | 65.2 |
| | 51-60 years | 97 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 95.3 |
| | Over 60 years | 15 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.1.3 Educational Level of Respondents

The educational background of the respondents was also a key area of focus in the study, as reported in Table 4.3. The data revealed a diverse range of educational levels among the respondents: 77 (23.9%) had no formal education, 83 (25.8%) had attained primary school education, 61 (18.9%) possessed a secondary school education, 97 (30.1%) hold a bachelor's degree, and 4 (1.2%) had completed a master's degree or higher. These findings demonstrate the variety in educational backgrounds within the public sector's customer base, with a significant portion of respondents lacking formal education. This variation in education levels is critical when interpreting customer needs and expectations.

Table 4. 3: Educational Level of Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | No formal education | 77 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 23.9 |
| | Primary school | 83 | 25.8 | 25.8 | 49.7 |
| | Secondary school | 61 | 18.9 | 18.9 | 68.6 |
| | Bachelor's degree | 97 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 98.8 |
| | Master's degree or higher | 4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.1.4 Respondents Economic Activity

This study also explored the economic activities of the respondents, as shown in Table 4.4. Among the 322 participants, 75 (23.3%) were employed in either private or public organizations, 97 (30.1%) were in merchant activities, 80 (24.8%) were farmers, and 70 (21.7%) were

unemployed. This data reveals that the customers of the public sector organizations represent a wide spectrum of economic activities, ranging from formal employment to agricultural work and self-employment. This broad diversity in economic backgrounds further underscores the varied nature of the public sector's customer base.

Table 4. 4: Respondents Economic Activity

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid The employee of (private/public organization) | 75 | 23.3 | 23.3 | 23.3 |
| Merchant | 97 | 30.1 | 30.1 | 53.4 |
| Farmer | 80 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 78.3 |
| Unemployed | 70 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.1.5 Primary Reason for Engaging with Public Sector Organizations

Turning to the reasons behind customers' engagement with public sector organizations, the study provided detailed insights into the primary motivations for accessing these services, as reflected in Table 4.5. The data showed that 137 respondents (42.5%) sought essential services, 26 (8.1%) were involved in administrative matters, 54 (16.8%) needed information, and 91 (28.3%) lodged complaints. Additionally, 14 respondents (4.3%) cited other reasons for their interaction. These findings indicate that the majority of customers were accessing essential services, suggesting that service provision was the primary motivation for most individuals engaging with public sector organizations.

Table 4. 5: Primary Reason for Engaging with Public Sector Organizations

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid To access essential services (to health, to pay tax, etc..) | 137 | 42.5 | 42.5 | 42.5 |
| For administrative purposes | 26 | 8.1 | 8.1 | 50.6 |
| To seek information or advice | 54 | 16.8 | 16.8 | 67.4 |
| To lodge complaints or feedback | 91 | 28.3 | 28.3 | 95.7 |
| Other (please specify) | 14 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.1.6 The Frequently Utilize the Services of Public Sector Organizations

The frequency of service usage was another aspect examined in the study, and Table 4.6 revealed interesting trends regarding customer behavior. It was observed that 23 respondents (7.1%) used the services on a weekly basis, 65 (20.2%) accessed services monthly, while the largest group of 234 respondents (72.7%) used the services rarely. This suggests that the overwhelming majority of customers engaged with public sector services infrequently, indicating that these services may not be part of their regular routine. This usage patterns are important for understanding how often public sector services are required by different customer groups.

Table 4. 6: The Frequently Utilize the Services of Public Sector Organizations

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Weekly | 23 | 7.1 | 7.1 | 7.1 |
| Monthly | 65 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 27.3 |
| Rarely | 234 | 72.7 | 72.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 322 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

The background information collected from the respondents has provided a comprehensive view of the diverse customer base engaging with public sector organizations. This foundational data offers valuable context for interpreting subsequent findings and can inform more targeted analysis of customer behavior and service expectations. As such, understanding this

demographic element is essential for further refining the study and driving meaningful insights from the data collected.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

To assess the expression of general customer attitude and perception towards the variables—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, transparency, and customer satisfaction- in some selected public sectors in Soyama zurya woreda, descriptive analysis was used. The study reported its central tendency and the data distribution which includes the frequencies, means, and standard deviations associated with the measure of each variable. In this way, the results provided a complete picture of the collective attitude of the respondents, on which a detailed analysis was then premised. This fully categorized information allowed for a better understanding of the study results.

The measuring of the variables was carried out through two widely different Likert scales. The five-point Likert scales were used to measure the qualities of service (tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency): 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Uncertain, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree, customer satisfaction. A separate variable was also measured on another five-point Likert scale: 1= Not Satisfied, 2= Slightly Satisfied, 3= Satisfied, 4= Very satisfied and 5= extremely satisfied. This dissimilar scale design then allowed for a supply-side and a demand-side analysis in evaluating relative service quality and degree of customer contentment, respectively.

The classification for calculating mean scores for the service quality factors was defined as follows: Mean scores 1.00 to 1.80 were classified as 'Strongly Disagree', 1.81 to 2.60 indicated 'Disagree', 2.61 to 3.40 indicated 'Uncertain, 3.41 to 4.20 indicated 'Agree', and 4.21 to 5.00 indicated 'Strongly Agree.' The Likert scale was kept constant at five points. The mean score ranges for customer satisfaction were classified into: 'Not Satisfied' (1.00-1.79), 'Slightly Satisfied' (1.80-2.60), 'Satisfied' (2.60-3.40), 'Very satisfied' (3.41-4.20), 'Extremely satisfied' (4.21-5.00) following the Likert scale criteria of Salac (2018).

With the relationship to variables of service quality (tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency), the calculated mean scores portrayed the extent of

agreement or disagreement by respondents in every item of the survey. The smaller value of the mean signifies a greater degree of disagreement by the respondent against approval of the same statement that assessed the pertinent variable, whereas the higher the mean score, the greater the agreement of the respondent with that statement. In the context of customer satisfaction, the mean indicates the level of satisfaction perceived by the respondents according to the answers given by them in the questionnaire. As the mean increased, the satisfaction level also increased; on the contrary, the mean decreased, reflecting fewer satisfaction levels.

Standard deviations of measured variables were used to offer insights about the variability in response patterns relevant to the measurements of each variable. The presented standard deviations of the variables of interest point towards the extent that the analyzed variable postulates concerning the varied respondent's answers in response to statements in the questionnaire. A high standard deviation of a variable rating shows a scattered nature of responses, although different answers suggest diverse opinions on the variable under focus, and the low value of standard deviation would suggest much consistency in the context of the responses- thus, touching on these variables' frequency distribution as well as mean and standard deviation furthering another level of an overview of statistical presentation.

4.2.1 The Perceived Tangibility

The study assessed the tangibility of selected public sector organizations within *Soyama zurya woreda*. Data collection was executed through carefully designed structured questionnaires, utilizing a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed respondents, as customers of these specific public sector organizations, to articulate their perceptions related to the tangibility of the services provided. The scale ranged from 1, indicating strong disagreement, to 5, signifying strong agreement, with intermediate levels for disagreement, uncertainty, and agreement indicated by 2, 3, and 4 respectively. Data gathered from a total of 322 respondents was then analyzed, with the results comprehensively summarized and presented in Table 4.7. This table provides a clear summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback concerning the tangibility of services at these public sector organizations.

Regarding Item 1, "The organization's physical appearance meets my expectations," a mean score of 2.9627 was recorded. This score reflects a level of uncertainty among the respondents.

The reported standard deviation, which was observed as 1.12678, suggests a moderately high degree of variability in customer opinions. The implication here is that while some customers find the physical appearance satisfactory, many others have expectations that are not entirely being met. Therefore, the finding indicates a pronounced need for improvement in the physical presentation of selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, indicating the need for a careful review of the existing standards.

Table 4. 7: The Perceived Tangibility in Service Quality

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| The organization's physical appearance meets my expectations. | 322 | 2.9627 | 1.12678 |
| The facility is clean and well-maintained. | 322 | 3.2453 | 1.20954 |
| The building and surroundings are visually appealing. | 322 | 3.0652 | 1.39160 |
| The waiting area is comfortable and pleasant. | 322 | 3.0528 | 1.23311 |
| The office space is organized and accessible. | 322 | 3.0155 | 1.19308 |
| The service environment is always clean and attractive. | 322 | 3.2019 | 1.16528 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0906 | 1.2198 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Further moving to Item 2, which stated, “The facility is clean and well maintained,” the mean score was found to be 3.2453. Although this value is slightly higher than the previous item, it indicates that, overall, customers feel some level of uncertainty regarding the cleanliness and maintenance of the facilities. A relatively wide standard deviation of 1.20954 was recorded. This standard deviation suggests that there’s a lack of consistency in the perception, indicating that some customers perceived the facility as cleaner than others. This finding shows variability in the experience of the customers of selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, thus emphasizing a need to improve operational maintenance practices.

The evaluation of Item 3, "The building and surroundings are visually appealing," revealed a mean score of 3.0652 and a standard deviation of 1.39160. The elevated standard deviation indicated a larger spread of opinions. Given the mean and standard deviation, the overall impression of the visual appeal of the buildings and surrounding areas was considered uncertain.

This outcome pointed toward a need for a focused evaluation of how the public spaces appear to the customers of the selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda.

Item 4, which noted "The waiting area is comfortable and pleasant," yielded a mean score of 3.0528. Once again, the mean score indicates a general uncertainty amongst customers regarding the comfort and pleasantness of the waiting area. The standard deviation of 1.23311 further confirmed the significant diversity of customer opinions about the waiting areas. Therefore, the finding points towards the importance of improving the waiting area of selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Regarding Item 5, "The office space is organized and accessible," the reported mean was 3.0155, a value that registers in the category of "uncertain". This indicates a lack of clarity in customer perceptions, suggesting a need for improvement in the organization and accessibility of the office spaces. Moreover, a standard deviation of 1.19308 was observed, suggesting a variation in the opinions regarding the organization and accessibility of these offices. Therefore, the findings call for the need for the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* to focus more on interior designs to make their space more appealing.

For Item 6, "The service environment is always clean and attractive," a mean score of 3.2019 was computed. While moderately higher than other items, the mean score demonstrates that the perceptions of customers were uncertain. The standard deviation recorded here is 1.16528, which indicates a modest variation in the customers' views of the service environment. Customers have indicated a need for the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* to provide a consistent and reliable experience.

Finally, the grand mean of all items related to tangibility was calculated at 3.0906, with a standard deviation of 1.2198. This grand mean falls within the "uncertain" category, suggesting that overall, customers' perceptions of the tangibility of the services provided by selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* are mixed, which calls for a comprehensive improvement to the physical aspects of the organizations, encompassing not only cleanliness and maintenance but also aesthetics and organization.

4.2.2 The Perceived Responsiveness

The study assessed the responsiveness of selected public organizations within Soyama zurya woreda. Data were collected through structured questionnaires employing a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed respondents, who were customers of these organizations, to express their perceptions of responsiveness. The scale ranged from 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Uncertain, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. Data collected from 322 respondents were analyzed, and the results are comprehensively presented in Table 4.8. This table provided a summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback regarding responsiveness at the studied public sector organizations.

Turning to Item 1, "Employees respond quickly to my service requests," a mean score of 3.0093 was observed. This result positioned itself directly at the "Uncertain" mark on the five-point scale. Also, a standard deviation of 1.21897 was calculated, which indicated a considerable variability in responses across the surveyed customers. This uncertainty suggested an inconsistent picture of responsiveness, with some respondents noting quick action by employees, while others experienced lengthy response times. Therefore, this finding suggested that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* should strive for improvement in this critical area of service delivery.

Furthermore, regarding Item 2, "Staff members are willing to assist me immediately," the analysis revealed a mean score of 2.9876. This score also placed the customer perception at the "Uncertain" level. A standard deviation of 1.25048 was also calculated, which, again, pointed to a wide range of customer experiences. This suggested that whilst some staff members are perceived as promptly helpful, others are not. Consequently, the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, have to review their staff training, motivation, and work flow to improve the immediate availability of support.

Table 4. 8: The Perceived Responsiveness

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| Employees respond quickly to my service requests. | 322 | 3.0093 | 1.21897 |
| Staff members are willing to assist me immediately. | 322 | 2.9876 | 1.25048 |
| My inquiries are responded to without delay. | 322 | 2.8758 | 1.29825 |
| Employees handle my issues quickly and efficiently. | 322 | 3.0186 | 1.30883 |
| The service staff reacts to my requests quickly. | 322 | 2.9503 | 1.19605 |
| The response time is always quick and effective. | 322 | 3.2019 | 1.16528 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Moving onto Item 3, "My inquiries are responded to without delay," the mean value of 2.8758 was recorded. This score again suggested a state of uncertainty among customers regarding the timeliness of responses to their inquiries. Moreover, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.29825 indicated that the experience of receiving a timely response varied enormously across the customer base. Given this uncertainty and variability, it is clear that the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* would benefit from reassessing their communication channels and internal processes.

In analyzing Item 4, "Employees handle my issues quickly and efficiently," a mean score of 3.0186 was found. This score placed the perception of efficiency and speed in handling customer issues on the border of uncertainty, which indicated a mixed opinion on these issues. A standard deviation of 1.30883 was calculated, suggesting considerable differences in how efficiently different types of issues were resolved. The selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* need to identify and address bottlenecks in their processes to ensure a consistently quick and efficient response.

Shifting the focus to Item 5, "The service staff reacts to my requests fast," a mean score of 2.9503 was observed. This value indicates that the perception of staff reacting to customer requests was also uncertain. The calculated standard deviation was 1.19605, showing a moderate level of variation in customer experiences. This suggests that while some requests are responded to quickly, this isn't the norm across the board. Therefore, selected public sector organizations in

Soyama zurya woreda should strive to make the fast response a constant and predictable feature of their service.

The evaluation of the sixth item, “The response time is always quick and effective,” registered a mean score of 3.2019. Although still labeled 'Uncertain,' this mean was the highest among all the items. The standard deviation of 1.16528 indicated some variation in customer experiences regarding the effectiveness of response times. It was observed that while this was a more positive result than most, this item still required some sort of attention as the perception remained uncertain. This shows the need to provide more training and better guidelines for the staff members.

Finally, examining the grand mean across all items, which were calculated at 3.0072, the overall perception of responsiveness is seen as "Uncertain." This result was paired with a standard deviation of 1.23964, showing the customer view of the responsiveness of service in selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* is not consistent. This reinforces the need for organizations to focus on improving their processes, training, and communication to provide a consistently responsive service. Therefore, selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* must focus on making improvements across the board.

4.2.3 The Perceived Empathy

The study investigated the presence of empathy within selected public organizations. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires that employed a five-point Likert scale. This instrument allowed respondents, who were the service users of these organizations, to articulate their perceptions of the empathy demonstrated by staff. The scale ranged from 1, representing ‘Strongly disagree,’ to 5, indicating ‘Strongly agree,’ with intermediate points of ‘Disagree’, ‘Uncertain,’ and ‘Agree’. Analysis was carried out on 322 completed questionnaires, and the findings are detailed in Table 4.9. This table summarized the mean scores and standard deviations relating to customer feedback on empathy within the researched public sector organizations.

The analysis of Item 1, "Employees treat me with respect and courtesy," revealed a mean score of 2.9907, which was categorized as "Uncertain." A standard deviation of 1.24176 was further

observed. This relatively high standard deviation indicated a substantial variance in customer opinions regarding the respect and courtesy shown by employees at the public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda. Therefore, this result indicates a pressing need for improvement, as opinions are considerably distributed, showing inconsistency.

Moving to the second item, “Staff members listen to my concerns attentively,” a mean score of 3.0342 was observed with a standard deviation of 1.18745. The mean score, slightly above the midpoint, reflects respondents' uncertainty about the attentiveness of staff when they have concerns. The standard deviation implies some variation in opinions. This indicates, selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, should further explore customer service training and development opportunities that would focus on active listening techniques, which would enhance the perception of their staff's attentiveness to customer concerns.

Table 4. 9: The Perceived Empathy

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| Employees treat me with respect and courtesy. | 322 | 2.9907 | 1.24176 |
| Staff members listen to my concerns attentively. | 322 | 3.0342 | 1.18745 |
| I feel valued by the organization's staff. | 322 | 3.0373 | 1.28441 |
| The organization provides personalized service to me. | 322 | 2.9845 | 1.16934 |
| Staff members are empathetic toward my concerns. | 322 | 3.0217 | 1.24160 |
| The organization ensures personalized attention during service. | 322 | 3.0963 | 1.21519 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

The third item, “I feel valued by the organization's staff,” yielded a mean score of 3.0373 and a standard deviation of 1.28441. Similar to the previous item, the mean score positioned around the midpoint highlights a degree of uncertainty among customers regarding whether they felt valued by the staff. The standard deviation is a notable amount of disparity in these customer perceptions. This leads to the conclusion that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, must take steps that may include implementing a feedback system to solicit input

from customers and use the input to create a work environment where employees make customers feel valued.

Regarding the fourth item, focused on, “The organization provides personalized service to me,” the data showed a mean score of 2.9845 with a standard deviation of 1.16934. The mean score indicates that respondents are uncertain about whether they received personalized service. The variability in responses is well documented through the standard deviation. It has been determined that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, ought to prioritize the implementation of strategies and tools designed to customize customer interaction that will promote individualized customer attention and enhance the customer experiences.

With respect to the fifth item, "Staff members are empathetic toward my concerns," a mean score of 3.0217 was found, along with a standard deviation of 1.24160. The mean score suggests respondents are uncertain about the extent of empathy demonstrated by staff toward their concerns. The recorded standard deviation of 1.24160 indicates that there is reasonable variance in employee displays of empathy. To improve, selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, should further implement soft skill training that is specifically designed to increase empathy levels in their workforce.

The sixth item, “The organization ensures personalized attention during service,” resulted in a mean score of 3.0963 and a standard deviation of 1.21519. This mean score, while still reflecting uncertainty, is the highest among all individual items, showing, by a small margin, that customers do perceive some level of personalized attention. The standard deviation signifies a moderate degree of variability. To continue to improve the customer experience, selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, should focus on strategies and initiatives that would maintain the present levels of customized treatment, while looking to identify and fix any inconsistency or gaps in service.

Finally, the grand mean, encompassing all items, revealed a score of 3.0072 with a standard deviation of 1.23964. This overall mean score aligns with the individual item findings, solidifying the view that respondents are generally uncertain about the empathy demonstrated by the studied public sector organizations. The standard deviation corroborates the variability seen

across the responses. Therefore, it can be concluded, that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*, have more work to do in order to improve their overall empathy levels across the board.

4.2.4 The Perceived Assurance

The study assessed the assurance levels within selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*. Data was collected through structured questionnaires employing a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed respondents, who were customers of these organizations, to express their perceptions of assurance. The scale ranged from 1, indicating ‘Strongly disagree’, to 5, indicating ‘Strongly agree’, with 3 representing “Uncertain”. Data collected from 322 respondents were analyzed, and the results are comprehensively presented in Table 4.10. This table provided a summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback regarding assurance in the studied public sector organizations.

Table 4. 10: The Perceived Assurance

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| Employees appear knowledgeable about the services offered. | 322 | 2.8913 | 1.26195 |
| The service staff shows expertise in handling issues. | 322 | 3.0124 | 1.23039 |
| Employees’ professionalism makes me trust their work. | 322 | 2.9273 | 1.28478 |
| The staff confidently answers all of my questions. | 322 | 3.1522 | 1.32733 |
| Employees are well-trained to handle my requests. | 322 | 3.0280 | 1.23393 |
| The organization’s staff instills confidence in their services. | 322 | 3.2174 | 1.16113 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Regarding the first item, "Employees appear knowledgeable about the services offered," the mean score was 2.8913, with a standard deviation of 1.26195. Given this mean score, situated on the scale “Uncertain”, the respondent’s perceptions were generally uncertain regarding the employees’ knowledge. This high standard deviation suggested a wide spread of opinions. Such results underscore the fact that there could be inconsistencies in the training that is provided to

the personal or variations among the individual employees in terms of the expertise they demonstrate. Therefore, improvement in staff training and knowledge management is required at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

The second item, "The service staff shows expertise in handling issues," displayed a mean score of 3.0124, accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.23039. This mean score signifies that customers were generally uncertain as to whether the service staff were truly knowledgeable in the handling of issues. Furthermore, the high variability, as indicated by the standard deviation, implies that experiences with the service staff's expertise varied, with some customers agreeing and others are disagreeing. Consequently, this variability pointed toward a need for a uniform professional development program in order to increase expertise in all the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Thirdly, the statement, "Employees' professionalism makes me trust their work," had a mean score of 2.9273, with a standard deviation of 1.28478. The mean score revealed uncertain customer perceptions regarding the perceived professional behavior among the employees that can promote customer trust. The relatively higher deviation meant that not everyone shared a common perception of the employees' professionalism. This lack of consistency highlighted a demand for standardized professionalism training and reinforcement of ethical behavior in the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Moving to item four, "The staff confidently answers all of my questions," the analysis revealed a mean score of 3.1522 and a standard deviation of 1.32733. The mean score was still leaning toward an uncertain perception, with a tendency of agreement, but showed that the certainty of the response was not accepted. Moreover, the significant deviation indicates a wide array of perspectives on staff confidence. Thus, these findings call for the development of enhanced communication skills and a more thorough knowledge base among the staff in order to ensure that all the customers feel well served in the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Item five, "Employees are well-trained to handle my requests," yielded a mean of 3.0280, with a standard deviation of 1.23393. This mean score, once again shows an uncertain perception that

the staff has the required technical know-how to provide needed service. The standard deviation revealed a considerable spread in views. Therefore, the data suggested the need for regular training programs to enhance the employees' skills and capabilities as well as standardize best practices in the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

The sixth assurance item, "The organization's staff instills confidence in their services," showed a slightly higher mean of 3.2174, with a standard deviation of 1.16113. The mean scores displayed that customers were a little more certain in their agreement that the staff does offer confidence in what they do, but the overall perception remained uncertain. The standard deviation, however, highlights the difference in perception of the level of confidence that the staff can instill in the customers. These findings highlighted inconsistent standards in the way the customers are handled and the level of confidence the customers hold in the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Finally, the overall grand mean for all assurance items, calculated at 3.0072 with a standard deviation of 1.23964, further emphasized a general uncertainty among the respondents across all items under the construct of assurance. This overall mean reinforced that the overall customer perception is more toward uncertainty regarding the assurance of service. This uncertainty, along with the high variability, called for a comprehensive re-evaluation of training protocols, consistent and quality service delivery, and ethical practices in the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

4.2.5 The Perceived Reliability

The study assessed the reliability of selected public organizations. Data was collected through structured questionnaires employing a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed respondents, who were customers of these organizations, to express their perceptions of reliability. The scale ranged from 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Uncertain, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree. Data collected from 322 respondents were analyzed, and the results are comprehensively presented in Table 4.11. This table provided a summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback regarding reliability at the studied public sector organizations.

Focusing first on item 1, which stated "I always receive dependable service from the organization," a mean score of 2.9193 was observed. A standard deviation of 1.21760 was also found for this item, which suggested a notable dispersion in opinions around the mean. This mean score, classified as "Uncertain," indicated that respondents, on average, neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement concerning their receiving dependable service. This, therefore, suggests selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Table 4. 11: The Perceived Reliability

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|--------|----------------|
| I always receive dependable service from the organization. | 322 | 2.9193 | 1.21760 |
| I rely on the organization for quality service. | 322 | 2.9379 | 1.12568 |
| Services are delivered as promised and expected. | 322 | 2.9255 | 1.23325 |
| The organization fulfills its promises consistently. | 322 | 2.9099 | 1.19238 |
| The service quality remains reliable in all situations. | 322 | 2.9907 | 1.23925 |
| The service is consistently available when needed. | 322 | 3.2112 | 1.18353 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Moving to item 2, "I rely on the organization for quality service," a mean of 2.9379 was identified. The standard deviation, which was 1.12568, revealed a moderate spread of responses around the mean. This average falls within the 'Uncertain' interpretation, signifying that the customer base, generally, did not perceive the organization as a reliable provider of quality service. It suggests that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* require a review of their service delivery mechanisms.

Item 3, "Services are delivered as promised and expected," possessed a mean of 2.9255. The standard deviation, measured at 1.23325, demonstrated that a fair amount of variability characterized the customer responses. With a designation of "Uncertain", this mean score highlighted a lack of definite customer agreement regarding whether services are consistently delivered as expected by the organizations. This suggests that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* could benefit from improving service fulfillment.

Analyzing item four, "The organization fulfills its promises consistently", a mean score of 2.9099 was observed, along with a standard deviation of 1.19238. The mean indicates, once more, that customers are 'Uncertain' about the consistency of promise fulfillment by the organization. The standard deviation also points out that there are varying perceptions of the delivery and consistency. This highlights that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* need to establish more reliable processes to ensure promise delivery consistency to improve customer reliability perceptions.

Proceeding to item 5, "The service quality remains reliable in all situations," a mean of 2.9907 was calculated. A considerable standard deviation of 1.23925 was also documented, indicating substantial differences in perception across respondents. The finding of 'Uncertain' mean implies that customers were not definitively confident about the consistency of service quality across varied situations. This suggests that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* might consider focusing on uniform service delivery across contexts.

The analysis of item six, "The service is consistently available when needed," revealed a mean score of 3.2112 and a standard deviation of 1.18353. While this mean score was slightly above the overall mean, it was categorized as 'Uncertain'. The standard deviation suggests that not all customers feel that the service is constantly available when needed. This suggests that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* must work towards a higher and more consistent level of service availability, with more focus on ensuring that services are consistently accessible when required.

Finally, the grand mean score for all items was calculated as 3.0072, with a standard deviation of 1.23964. This composite mean score reflects an overall customer perception that is best described as 'Uncertain' about the reliability of services provided by the organization and its offerings. The rather high standard deviation indicates inconsistencies in the perception of services across the board. This indicates that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* should work toward improving service delivery consistency and efficiency.

4.2.6 The Perceived Transparency

The study assessed the transparency of selected public organizations. Data were collected through structured questionnaires employing a five-point Likert scale. This scale allowed respondents, who were customers of these organizations, to express their perceptions of transparency. The scale ranged from 1= strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Uncertain, 4= Agree, to 5= Strongly Agree. Data collected from 322 respondents were analyzed, and the results are comprehensively presented in Table 4.12. This table provided a summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback regarding transparency at the studied public sector organizations.

The first item, concerning the transparency and ease of following service processes, yielded a mean score of 3.0280. A standard deviation of 1.21356 was observed. This relatively high degree of variability indicates a range of perceptions amongst the customers. The mean score of 3.0280, interpreted as "uncertain," reveals that customers neither agree nor disagree, suggesting that the level of transparency in service processes was not consistently perceived, pointing toward a need for improvement in selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya worda*.

Table 4. 12: The Perceived Transparency

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-----|--------|----------------|
| The service process is transparent and easy to follow. | 322 | 3.0280 | 1.21356 |
| Information regarding services is always available and transparent. | 322 | 2.9720 | 1.26878 |
| Employees openly share important service information with me. | 322 | 2.9783 | 1.30760 |
| The organization provides clear information about costs. | 322 | 3.0839 | 1.27611 |
| Staff members offer transparent answers to my queries. | 322 | 2.8975 | 1.22235 |
| The organization is open and honest with customers. | 322 | 3.2795 | 1.09812 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

In terms of the availability and transparency of service information (Item 2), a mean score of 2.9720 was obtained. This mean value, slightly below the neutral point of the scale, indicated

that customers, on average, expressed uncertainty about the ready availability and transparency of service information. A standard deviation of 1.26878 was computed, which implied a wider range of opinions among respondents, with some seeing transparency while others lacked access or found it unclear. This finding underlined the need for improvement in the way crucial service information is communicated by selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

When looking at the extent to which employees openly share service information (Item 3), a mean score of 2.9783 was reported. This mean score, falling just below the midpoint of the scale, indicated customer uncertainty about employees' openness in sharing essential service details. A standard deviation of 1.30760 was calculated, which showed a significant degree of disparity in customer experiences, with some reporting clear communication while many did not feel that was the case. This variability suggested that some staff members might excel in information sharing, while others need to improve the service experience. This implies some inconsistent transparency within selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Concerning clear cost-related information (Item 4), a mean score of 3.0839 was found. This mean, while slightly above the scale's midpoint, nevertheless indicated a degree of uncertainty among customers regarding the clarity of cost information provided by these public sector organizations. A standard deviation of 1.27611 was determined, which highlighted those perceptions about the clarity of cost information ranged from favorable to dissatisfied. This ambiguity suggested a need for these organizations to ensure all costs are communicated clearly and transparently to all customers, in a consistent method. The findings suggested that a clear cost structure is not readily apparent and needs to be addressed within selected public sector organizations in *Soyama Zurya Woreda*.

Item 5, "Staff members offer transparent answers to my queries," measured a mean score of 2.8975. This is the lowest mean among all the items, moving closer to the area of disagreement, coupled with a standard deviation of 1.22235. This indicates a significant proportion of customers feel their queries are not met with transparency. This concerning result implies that selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* need to train staff on how to be more open and clearer in their communication, particularly when addressing customer questions.

Regarding the organization's openness and honesty with customers (Item 6), a mean score of 3.2795 was documented. This means, while above the midpoint, still suggests a degree of uncertainty among customers about the organization's overall honesty and openness, this uncertainty is still a gap that needs to be addressed. A standard deviation of 1.09812 was observed, which implied that, while opinions are more clustered around the 'agree' range, some uncertainty still exists. The result suggested that while there might appear to be a perception of honesty, a consistent transparent practice needed further improvement. This points to an opportunity for improvement in selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Finally, the grand mean score of 3.0072 was calculated (Item 7), thereby reflecting an overall state of uncertainty across all the transparency items examined. This grand mean indicated a prevalent ambivalence regarding transparency within the studied public sector organizations. A standard deviation of 1.23964 was seen, which indicated a fair amount of variation in customer perceptions. This overall uncertainty suggested a need for selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda* to implement focused strategies aimed at improving and assuring transparency across all aspects of their operations and customer interactions to reduce the uncertainty of service.

4.2.7 The Perceived Customer Satisfaction

The customer satisfaction of selected public organizations was thoroughly assessed in this study. Data collection was achieved using structured questionnaires which employed a five-point Likert scale. This instrument allowed respondents, who were customers of these organizations, to express their perceptions of customer satisfaction. The scale ranged from 1 (Not Satisfied) to 5 (Extremely Satisfied), indicating increasing levels of contentment. Data collected from 322 respondents were analyzed, and the results were comprehensively presented in Table 4.13. This table offered a summary of the means and standard deviations of customer feedback.

For Item 1, related to satisfaction with employee responses, a mean score of 2.9727 was yielded. This fell within the "Satisfied" interpretation range, suggesting a general level of contentment, yet also indicating that some customers were less than completely happy with initial employee engagement. A standard deviation of 1.14309 was noted, which highlighted variability in customer perception. This variability suggested that while some considered responses favorable,

others may have had experiences that did not reach the mid-range mark, therefore room for improvement may exist.

Table 4. 13: The Perceived Customer Satisfaction

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-----|--------|----------------|
| I am satisfied with employee responses to inquiries. | 322 | 2.9727 | 1.14309 |
| The service provided was worth the time spent waiting. | 322 | 3.1491 | 1.13572 |
| The service made my experience enjoyable. | 322 | 3.2683 | 1.23865 |
| I am pleased with the assistance received | 322 | 3.0783 | 1.12201 |
| I am satisfied with the results of the services obtained | 322 | 3.0416 | 1.12933 |
| My experience was convenient and efficient in the overall delivery | 322 | 3.2236 | 1.12438 |
| Grand Mean | 322 | 3.0072 | 1.23964 |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Shifting to item 2, concerning the waiting time value, a mean score of 3.1491 was established. This score also falls within the “Satisfied” category, which indicates an acceptable but not overly enthusiastic customer satisfaction level for services that were obtained after waiting. Again, some customers may not view the time spent was worth it. The standard deviation was measured at 1.13572, indicating an almost similar spread of views as was found in item 1. This suggests a need to evaluate the efficiency of services and to potentially reduce waiting times further in selected public sector organizations in *soyama zurya woreda*.

Item 3, which assessed whether the service experience was enjoyable, showed a mean score of 3.2683. The findings placed this in the range of "Satisfied", yet with customers slightly leaning toward a more enjoyable experience than with the previous item. The standard deviation was a little bit higher at 1.23865, which suggested a slightly wider variation in individual experiences. This highlighted the idea of improving the service delivery that can be addressed to further raise this level of enjoyment among the customers at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

The satisfaction with the assistance received, as measured in Item 4, was noted at a mean of 3.0783. This score placed the service in the "Satisfied" category. The standard deviation was

calculated at 1.12201. This again, indicates the existence of variability in the quality of assistance received. While the average score suggested general satisfaction, the standard deviation reveals that some customers had experiences that were not as satisfactory, possibly due to the lack of consistency in the service assistance provided to the customers at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Item 5, about satisfaction with the results of services obtained, yielded a mean score of 3.0416. This, once more, was interpreted as "Satisfied." A standard deviation of 1.12933 was recorded, which further indicates existing variability in customer perceptions, which is similar to other items. It should be noted that some customers experienced less than very satisfactory, despite the average reaching the "Satisfied" mark. This indicates a potential need to standardize the quality of services provided at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

The evaluation of overall delivery convenience and efficiency, in Item 6, recorded a mean score of 3.2236. This places the item at the "Satisfied" level, with the customers being seemingly more satisfied, compared to other items. The standard deviation was recorded at 1.12438, similar to the results from the previous items. This suggests while general satisfaction was found, some customers may have encountered less convenient or efficient experiences. This suggests that some parts of the delivery process would need improvement at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

Finally, the grand mean of all items was computed at 3.0072, which placed the overall customer satisfaction at the "Satisfied" level. Despite this, the standard deviation of 1.23964 points out a significant spread in customer experiences across all items. This variability highlights that many customers didn't find their experience completely satisfactory. Improvement in all areas of service may be beneficial. Therefore, further assessment and process improvements in all items may be considered at the selected public sector organizations in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

4.3 The Relationships Between the Independent and Dependent Variables

The research initiated a thorough examination of the relationships between key service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. A correlational analysis, chosen as the primary statistical approach, was employed to dissect the strength and direction of associations between the

independent variables—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and perceived transparency—and the dependent variable, customer satisfaction. The study was dedicated to understanding how changes in these specific service quality attributes were predicted to impact the levels of customer satisfaction within a selected public facility located in *Soyama zurya woreda*.

To assess the correlational values and make standardized interpretations, the guidelines were adopted from Evans (1996), as cited by Beldjazia and Alatou (2016); this framework was applied to consistently classify the strength of the calculated relationships. Consequently, correlation coefficients (r) were interpreted according to a set scale; values between 0.00 and 0.19 indicated a very weak association, 0.20 to 0.39 reflected a weak relationship, 0.40 to 0.59 indicated a moderate relationship, 0.60 to 0.79 showed a strong relationship, and 0.80 to 1.00 denoted a very strong relationship. The scale, thus, functioned as an anchor for describing both the direction and degree of the relationships between the independent dimensions of service quality and the dependent variable of customer satisfaction. The data that was collected further examined the statistical significance of each relationship. The Pearson correlation coefficients along with their corresponding statistical significances of each relationship were then reported methodically in Table 4.14.

The correlation analysis, as presented in Table 4.14, revealed a statistically significant and very strong positive correlation between tangibility and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient (r) of 0.817 ($p < .001$). It was thus implied that as customers of the *Soyama zurya woreda* organization perceived the physical aspects of the service—such as the location, infrastructure, equipment, and staff appearance—to be enhanced, a corresponding elevation in their satisfaction levels was subsequently noted. This strong relationship suggested strongly that improvements made to the physical service environment could be very efficacious in amplifying the overall customer satisfaction within the organization; therefore, it was needed for improvement.

Furthermore, the relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction was also examined in Table 4.14 and was found to be strongly and positively correlated, with a coefficient (r) of 0.763 ($p < .001$). It was evident that the organization's capacity to assist customers promptly and willingly was strongly linked to the reported satisfaction levels. Through this

correlation, it was indicated that the speed and willingness of staff to assist directly contributed to customer satisfaction within *Soyama zurya woreda*. These findings strongly suggested that focusing on staff training to improve responsiveness was a necessary element to consider for improving customer satisfaction.

Table 4. 14: The Relationships Between the Independent and Dependent Variables

| | | TAN | REP | EMP | ASU | REL | TRN | CUS |
|-----|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| TAN | Pearson Correlation | 1 | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | | | | | | |
| REP | Pearson Correlation | .783** | 1 | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | | | | | |
| EMP | Pearson Correlation | .771** | .649** | 1 | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | | | | |
| ASU | Pearson Correlation | .851** | .741** | .750** | 1 | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | | | |
| REL | Pearson Correlation | .764** | .679** | .623** | .782** | 1 | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | | |
| TRN | Pearson Correlation | .789** | .631** | .778** | .727** | .649** | 1 | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | |
| CUS | Pearson Correlation | .817** | .763** | .729** | .805** | .722** | .727** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |

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

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Moving on, the correlation analysis in Table 4.14 further demonstrated empathy to possess a strong positive correlation with customer satisfaction, with a coefficient (r) of 0.729 ($p < .001$). This observation was particularly notable as it showed that the perception of the staff's genuine understanding and care for the customer was a significant factor in determining satisfaction levels. In other words, the personal touch and the feeling of being understood and cared for were shown to be crucial elements in creating positive customer experiences. Therefore, it was implied that building a corporate culture that prioritizes empathy should be a central component of the organization's customer service strategy, needs improvement.

Regarding the assurance dimension, the data in Table 4.14, through the correlation analysis, presented a very strong positive correlation between Assurance and customer satisfaction, with a coefficient (r) of 0.805 ($p < .001$). This statistically significant outcome, through analyzed results, clearly demonstrated that customers' perceptions of the staff's proficiency were highly connected with their satisfaction levels. It was found that the more assurance was provided by the staff, the higher the customer satisfaction. Therefore, it was suggested that staff should be trained to instill confidence in their services which directly translated to increased customer satisfaction.

The correlation analysis in Table 4.14 further indicated that reliability also demonstrated a statistically significant, positive association with customer satisfaction, achieving a correlation coefficient of (r) = 0.722 ($p < .001$). As could be observed from the results, reliability acted as a robust indicator of customer satisfaction. Customers placed high value on consistent service delivery, exhibiting an increase in satisfaction when the service was dependable and consistent. Accordingly, it was strongly indicated that the *Soyama zurya woreda* organization should emphasize the building of a dependable and consistent service delivery reputation to ensure the maintenance and improvement of customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, Table 4.14 presented that transparency had a strong positive correlation with customer satisfaction, shown by a coefficient (r) of 0.727 ($p < .001$). The finding showed that customers who felt that the organization was being upfront and honest about its practices tended to report higher levels of satisfaction. The level of satisfaction was considerably impacted by the organization's openness and clear communication channels. Consequently, it would appear beneficial for the *Soyama zurya woreda* organization to continue to engage in and implement policies that promote transparency, establishing channels of open communication with its customers to further increase customer satisfaction.

The correlation analysis, as detailed in Table 4.14, emphatically demonstrated that all measured service quality dimensions—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and perceived transparency—held statistically significant, strong to very strong positive relationships with customer satisfaction within the *Soyama zurya woreda* selected public organization. The data suggested that these service aspects were key determinants of overall customer satisfaction.

It was therefore concluded that continuous efforts toward enhancing these dimensions will invariably result in increased customer satisfaction within the *Soyama zurya woreda* selected public organization.

4.5 Diagnostics of Assumptions in Regression

The groundwork for understanding the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction was initially laid through descriptive and correlational analyses. The descriptive analysis elucidated the data's fundamental properties, revealing key statistical characteristics of the variables under scrutiny. Subsequently, the correlation analysis was implemented, confirming the existence of relationships between the dependent variable and independent variables. These initial findings, while demonstrably establishing associations, were not sufficient to deduce the specific determinants of customer satisfaction. Indeed, a deeper investigation, focusing on analyzing each independent variable's effect sequentially, was considered necessary; therefore to further this line of inquiry, assessment of each specific determinant was deemed essential.

Following these preliminary analyses, the validity of a subsequent linear regression analysis was predicated upon confirming that the parametric assumptions were met. The importance of adherence to these assumptions was highlighted by Hair et al. (2006), who emphasized the need for regression to be deployed on data that accurately reflects the sampled population. This ensures the reliability of the output data and therefore facilitates greater confidence in the generated analysis. As such, to ensure the integrity of the statistical model and to enable accurate and meaningful interpretations, a rigorous sequence of diagnostic tests was followed to assess and thus confirm the validity of linear regression assumptions, and therefore the validity of model findings. The specific diagnostics of these assumptions were conducted as the next step in the analysis.

4.5.1 Test of the Outliers in the Data

In order to guarantee the validity of regression analyses, an initial evaluation of outliers was performed, adhering to Pallant's 2010 advice regarding the reduction of anomalous data's influence on the sensitivity of models. Case-by-case diagnostics were utilized to detect multivariate outliers, which were considered capable of skewing the accurate representation of

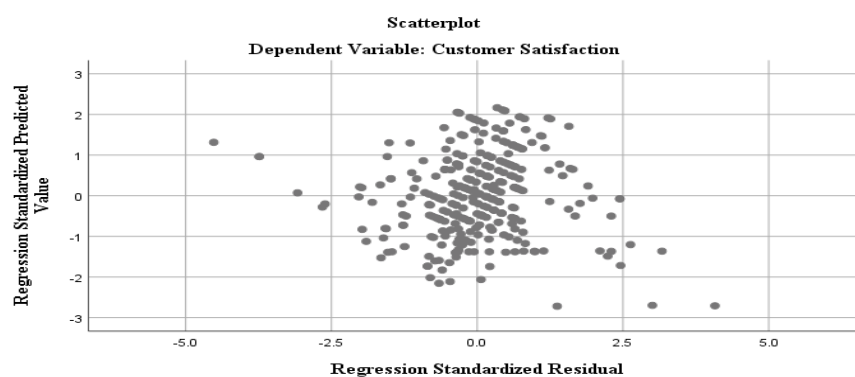
inter-variable relationships. Two specific data points were identified as showing significant deviations from the established data pattern and were consequently removed from further analysis. This proactive action preserved the integrity of the foundational statistical assumptions and resulted in a more credible and dependable regression model.

4.5.2 Linearity Test

The assumption of linearity is crucial in multiple linear regression models, as it guarantees the proper interpretation of the relationship between dependent and independent variables (Anol, 2012). When this assumption holds, the response variable (Y) is assumed to be a linear function of the predictors X_1, X_2, \dots, X_N . If the relationship deviates from linearity, the regression model's estimates may become biased or incorrect, thus compromising the integrity of the analysis. As such, it is imperative to test the linearity assumption to ensure that the model provides reliable results and accurate conclusions.

To assess the validity of the linearity assumption, this study utilized residual scatterplots. When the assumption holds, the residuals should display a random scattering around zero, with most of the data points clustering near the center. In the present study, the residuals from the scatterplots of service quality and customer satisfaction (Figure 4.1) displayed such a random pattern, with a concentration around zero. This pattern strongly suggested that the linearity assumption was indeed satisfied, thereby reinforcing the reliability of the regression model's conclusions.

Figure 4. 1: Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residual

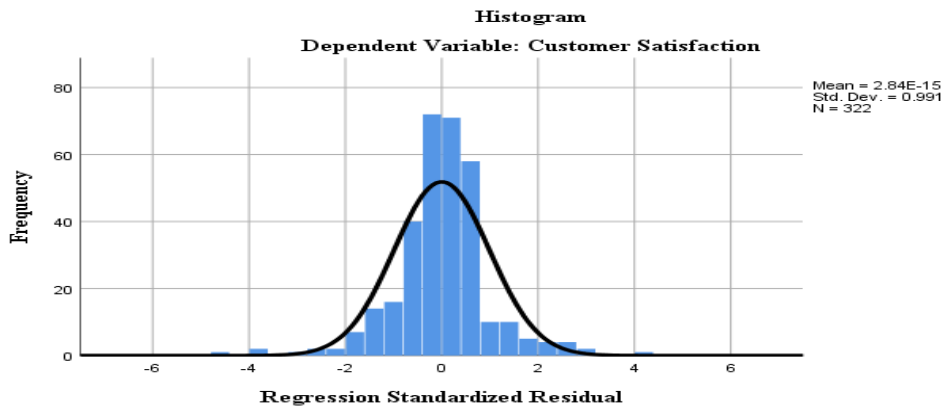


Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.5.3 Normality Test

Normality is another crucial assumption for multiple regression analysis, which posits that the variables should be normally distributed (Darlington, 1968). This means that the errors must be normally distributed, resulting in a plot of the residuals that approximates a normal curve (Keith, 2006). This distribution can be assessed by evaluating kurtosis, which measures the peakness or flatness of the curve, and skewness, which examines the balance of the distribution. These factors ensure the reliability of regression results by confirming the residuals are normally distributed.

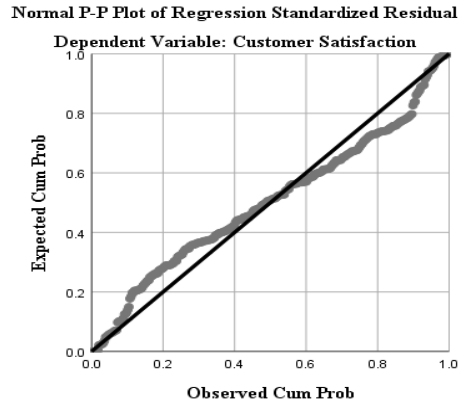
Figure 4. 2: Histogram of Regression Standardized Residual



Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

In this research, normality was evaluated through an examination of the Histogram along with the P-P plot. For the normality assumption to be fulfilled, the Histogram ought to be symmetrical around zero, and the P-P plot must reveal points near the diagonal line. After analyzing the Histogram depicted in Figure 4.2 and the P-P plot shown in Figure 4.3, it was observed that the Histogram exhibited symmetry, and the P-P plot indicated that the points were closely aligned with the diagonal, thereby confirming that the normality assumption was met for the regression model.

Figure 4. 3: Normal P-P of Regression Standardized Residual



Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.5.4 Multicollinearity Test

The assumption of multicollinearity in multiple linear regression analysis was thoroughly assessed in the study, revealing that multicollinearity was not a significant issue. Tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF) are used to check multicollinearity (Muijs, 2010). Tolerance, which reflects the variance in an independent variable unexplained by others, was found to be adequate, with scores suggesting that no predictor variable overly explained the variance of others. Additionally, VIF values, required to be below 4.16, were consistently low in this study. These findings reinforced the conclusion that multicollinearity did not pose a problem in the regression models used in this research.

Table 4. 15: Variance Inflation Factors (VIF)

| | | Tolerance | VIF |
|---|----------------|-----------|-------|
| 1 | Tangibility | .171 | 5.849 |
| | Responsiveness | .360 | 2.780 |
| | Empathy | .309 | 3.239 |
| | Assurance | .212 | 4.717 |
| | Reliability | .345 | 2.900 |
| | Transparency | .303 | 3.298 |

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.5.5 Autocorrelation Test

The assumption of autocorrelation, or the independence of errors, is a crucial aspect of multiple linear regression analysis, ensuring that the errors are not correlated. According to Stevens (2009), the Durbin-Watson statistic tests this assumption, with values ranging from 0 to 4. A value close to 2 indicates no autocorrelation, while values below 1 or above 3 suggest serious issues. The presence of autocorrelation can distort model accuracy, leading to invalid conclusions.

In this study, as shown in Table 4.17, the Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.879. This figure indicates that the model does not show signs of autocorrelation, supporting the legitimacy of the regression findings and demonstrating that the residuals are autonomous, thereby enhancing the trustworthiness of the analysis.

Table 4. 16: Autocorrelation Test

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .867 ^a | .751 | .747 | .37921 | 1.879 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, And Transparency | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction | | | | | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.5.6 Homoscedasticity of the Error Terms

The assumption of homoscedasticity, as described by Hair et al. (2006), suggests that the variance in the dependent variable should remain consistent across all levels of independent variables. This assumption is crucial in multiple linear regressions as it ensures that the error terms do not display systematic variations. If violated, it could undermine the reliability of the model's estimates, leading to inefficiencies in predicting the dependent variable's behavior. Testing homoscedasticity, therefore, serves as a vital check in ensuring the robustness of regression results.

In this study, the homoscedasticity assumption was evaluated using scatterplots of standardized residuals, as outlined by Hair et al. (2006). The scatterplot, shown in Figure 4.1, demonstrated

that the residuals displayed no distinct patterns or clustering. This absence of specific trends signified that the homoscedasticity assumption held true, ensuring that the model's error variance remained constant across all levels of the independent variables, confirming the adequacy of the regression model for the analysis.

The assumptions of multiple linear regressions were met, according to the results of the basic diagnostics assumption test of regression analysis. With no deviations from key assumptions like multicollinearity, normality, linearity, autocorrelation, or Homoscedasticity, the data were now prepared for interpretation. This validation process ensured that the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction was accurately captured by the regression model.

4.6 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The study proceeded to investigate factors influencing customer satisfaction after thorough diagnostic testing confirmed adherence to the Classical Linear Regression Assumptions. The presentation and interpretation of the analytical output became crucial when the model assumptions were confirmed. According to Keith (2006), the study involved estimating or forecasting the value of one variable (the dependent variable, represented by Y) from one or more independent variables (represented by X). The analysis produced beta coefficients, ANOVA assertions, and model summaries, all of which were carefully examined to guarantee correctness in interpreting the findings.

4.6.1 Model Summary

According to the regression analysis results between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction of selected public organizations, as presented in Table 4.18, the results showed that service quality dimensions significantly influenced customer satisfaction. When considering the correlation or relationship between the dependent and independent variables, the value of R was found to be 0.867. This indicated a strong positive relationship between the service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction in public sector organizations, highlighting the critical role service quality plays in determining customer satisfaction levels.

Table 4. 17: Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .867 ^a | .751 | .747 | .37921 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, And Transparency | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction | | | | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

R square, known as the coefficient of determination or explained variance, is the square of the multiple R-value, which was 0.751. This confirmed that 75.1% of the variation in customer satisfaction could be explained by the service quality dimensions studied in the research. However, it also indicated that 24.9% of the variation in customer satisfaction of the selected public organizations was explained by factors outside the integrated service quality dimensions. This suggests that other elements beyond service quality contribute to shaping customer satisfaction levels.

4.6.2 The Regression Model Variance Analysis (ANOVA)

The F-test was used to evaluate the concurrent effect of independent variables on dependent variables. According to Kuncoro (2001), the F-statistics test primarily reveals whether all of the independent variables included in the model collectively influence the dependent variable. The F-test revealed the overall significance of the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfactions, ensuring the robustness of the regulation model. A significant F-statistic would enhance the model's validity in explaining customer satisfaction outcomes.

Table 4. 18: The Regression Model Variance Analysis (ANOVA)

| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 136.896 | 6 | 22.816 | 158.665 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 45.297 | 315 | .144 | | |
| | Total | 182.193 | 321 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, And Transparency | | | | | | |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

The probability value of 0.000, as shown in Table 4.19, suggests that the regulation relationship was extremely significant in predicting the influence of Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, and Transparency on customer satisfaction. The F-critical ratio at the 5% level of significance was 158.665. This value confirmed that the overall regression model was well-suited to the data. The statistical significance and high F-critical ratio provided strong evidence that service quality dimensions collectively had a significant impact on customer satisfaction in the selected public sector organizations.

4.6.3 The Regression Coefficient Analysis

The coefficients in the linear equation were estimated using multiple linear regression, which involved examining one or more independent variables to determine their ability to predict the dependent variable. In this study, multiple linear regression was used to investigate the explanatory power of numerous service quality dimensions—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and perceived transparency—in determining customer satisfaction. The significance level was set at 0.05, with a 95% confidence interval, ensuring statistical reliability. The regression analysis model summary, as shown in Table 4.20, demonstrated the direct impact of these parameters on customer satisfaction.

From the independent variables illustrated in the aforementioned table 4:20, Responsiveness had the highest regression coefficient with $\beta = 0.238$, $p < 0.05$, followed by Assurance with $\beta = 0.228$, $p < 0.05$. Tangibility exhibited a coefficient of $\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.05$, while Transparency stood at $\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.05$. Empathy was recorded at $\beta = 0.106$, $p < 0.05$, and lastly, Reliability

had the smallest coefficient with $\beta = 0.093$, $p < 0.05$. This shows that all independent variables listed in this analysis significantly influenced customer satisfaction. Among them, Responsiveness had the most notable impact, indicating its importance in determining the quality of service delivered.

Table 4. 19: Regression Coefficient result of effect of study independent variables on Satisfaction

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | .428 | .094 | | 4.548 | .000 |
| REP | .213 | .042 | .238 | 5.082 | .000 |
| ASU | .209 | .056 | .228 | 3.739 | .000 |
| TAN | .171 | .061 | .191 | 2.810 | .005 |
| TRN | .103 | .045 | .118 | 2.307 | .022 |
| EMP | .099 | .047 | .106 | 2.095 | .037 |
| REL | .093 | .048 | .093 | 1.949 | .052 |

a. Dependent Variable: Customer satisfaction

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

Depending on the results illustrated in the regression coefficient test, the multiple linear regression equation indicated Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, and Perceived Transparency were arranged as follows: Responsiveness emerged as the strongest predictor, followed closely by Assurance and Tangibility, all significantly affecting customer satisfaction in the study.

Table 4:20 shows that responsiveness had the highest regulation efficiency ($\beta = 0.238$, $p < 0.05$), followed by assurance ($\beta = 0.228$, $p < 0.05$). The coefficient of tangibility ($\beta = 0.191$, $p < 0.05$) was higher than that of transparency ($\beta = 0.118$, $p < 0.05$). Empathy was recorded at $\beta = 0.106$, $p < 0.05$, while reliability had the smallest coefficient ($\beta = 0.093$, $p < 0.05$). This demonstrates that all of the independent variables identified in this analysis had a significant effect on customer satisfaction. Among them, responsiveness had the greatest influence, demonstrating its importance in determining the quality of service delivered.

Based on the results of the regulation efficiency test, the multilinear regulation equation indicated Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, and Perceived

Transparency as follows: Responsiveness emerged as the strongest predictor, followed closely by Assurance and Tangibility, all of which have a substantial impact on customer satisfaction within the Soyama zurya woreda public organization.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + e$$

$$Y = 0.428 + 0.238X_1 + 0.228X_2 + 0.191X_3 + 0.118X_4 + 0.106X_5 + 0.093X_6 + e$$

Where:

- S = Customer Satisfaction
- β_0 = intercept
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5$ and β_6 = coefficient of
- X_1 = Responsiveness
- X_2 = Assurance
- X_3 = Tangibility
- X_4 = Transparency
- X_5 = Empathy
- X_6 = Reliability
- e = error term

4.7 Hypothesis Test

To test the formulated hypothesis in this research, the multiple regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of “Tangibility, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, Reliability, and Perceived Transparency” on customer satisfaction in selected public organizations. The test was conducted at a 5% level of significance. When the p-value exceeded 5%, it indicated insignificance, while a p-value below 5% confirmed a significant relationship between the study variables. This analysis allowed for the identification of factors contributing most to customer satisfaction in public sector organizations.

Subsequently, moving to the specifics of the regression, the analysis revealed a compelling connection between responsiveness and customer satisfaction. The coefficient results detailed in Table 4.20 showed that responsiveness exerted a significant positive influence on satisfaction,

yielding a standardized beta of 0.238 and a highly significant p-value of 0.003. This finding underscored the importance of prompt and attentive service, as it directly linked to a 23.8% increase in customer satisfaction. Therefore, the investigation indicated that investments in enhancing responsiveness, by the public sector organizations of Soyama Zurya Woreda, directly improved the experience of their constituents; thus, the related hypothesis was accepted.

Furthermore, the regression analysis unearthed another significant relationship, solidifying the impact of assurance on customer satisfaction. The data from Table 4.20 displayed that the level of assurance provided by the public sector organizations positively and significantly affected customer satisfaction, indicated by a standardized beta coefficient of 0.228 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggested a tangible impact, with a notable 22.8% increase in customer satisfaction directly correlated to increased assurance. The data pointed toward the value of projecting competence and trust in public service delivery within the selected organizations of Soyama Zurya Woreda; hence, the relevant hypothesis was accepted.

In addition, the research revealed the importance of tangible aspects of public service delivery, as Table 4.20 showed a significant correlation. The coefficient result displayed that tangibility had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, evidenced by a standardized beta of 0.191 and a p-value of 0.003. This indicated that improving the quality of physical facilities, equipment, and appearance positively contributed to a 19.1% boost in customer satisfaction. Consequently, the data suggested a prudent approach for Soyama Zurya Woreda public sector organizations to consider focused investment in their tangible elements of service, thus validating the study's hypothesis on tangibility.

Turning to another crucial element, the investigation further established the vital link between transparency and customer satisfaction. The analysis presented in Table 4.20 demonstrated that transparency positively and significantly affected customer satisfaction within the selected organizations. With a standardized beta of 0.118 and a p-value of 0.000, the data clearly indicated that an 11.8% increase in customer satisfaction was attributable to the increased openness and clarity in service delivery. Therefore, the data suggested that investing in transparent practices within the public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda leads to better citizen satisfaction, hence accepting the hypothesis on transparency.

Moreover, the examination of empathy showed a significant and consistent pattern impacting customer perspectives on public service delivery. Looking at Table 4.20, the coefficient results show that empathy positively and significantly impacted customer satisfaction, marked by a standardized beta of 0.106 and a p-value of 0.000. This signified that when public sector employees demonstrated understanding and caring attitudes towards constituents, customer satisfaction increased by 10.6%. This outcome reinforced the importance of training staff for empathetic interaction within Soyama Zurya Woreda public sector organizations, hence validating the relevant hypothesis.

Finally, the analysis of reliability contributed a final piece of the overall picture, demonstrating significance in the context of public services and customer satisfaction. The regression results shown in Table 4.20 indicated that reliability had a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction, supported by a standardized beta of 0.093 and a p-value of 0.000. This signified that a 9.3% improvement in customer satisfaction could be attributed solely to the perceived consistency and dependability in services offered by the public sector. Based on this, it was concluded that the Soyama Zurya Woreda public sector organizations must maintain and nurture a framework of reliability for consistent customer satisfaction, thus supporting the researchers hypothesis and finding.

Table 4. 20: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

| | Hypothesis | Findings | | Result |
|----|--|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| | | β -values | p – values | |
| H1 | There is a relationship between tangibles in service quality and customer satisfaction | $\beta = 0.191$ | $P=0.000$ | Supported |
| H2 | There is a relationship between responsiveness in service quality and customer satisfaction. | $\beta = 0.238$ | $p = 0.000$ | Supported |
| H3 | There is a relationship between empathy in service quality and customer satisfaction | $\beta = 0.106$ | $p =0.037$ | Supported |
| H4 | There is a relationship between assurance in service quality and customer satisfaction | $\beta = 0.228$ | $p =0.000$ | Supported |
| H5 | There is a relationship between reliability in service quality and customer satisfaction | $\beta = 0.093$ | $p =0.52$ | Supported |
| H6 | There is a relationship between transparency in service quality and customer satisfaction. | $\beta = 0.118$ | $p =0.022$ | Supported |

Source: Survey Data, SPSS v26, 2025

4.8 Discussion of Findings of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to assess the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction within selected public organizations in Soyama Zurya woreda. Specifically, six key aspects—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency—were examined in relation to customer satisfaction. Upon thorough data collection and rigorous analysis, the results were articulated effectively. Now, those results are also discussed based on the previous researcher's result.

Responsiveness, as was found, exerted a significant influence on customer satisfaction ($B=0.238$, $P <0.05$). The implication of the coefficient was that each unit increase in responsiveness corresponded to a 0.238 change in customer satisfaction. This result was found to be consistent with work of Ofosu-Boateng & Acquaye (2020) found that responsiveness significantly impacted customer satisfaction in public service delivery. Similarly, prior work by Mutua and Kariuki (2020) discovered that enhanced responsiveness created greater user satisfaction within

governmental agencies. Likewise, Woldemichael (2024) showed that responsiveness improved citizen engagement with local services. This result collectively showed the importance of quick and helpful actions to citizen satisfaction. This implies that improvement in responsiveness contributes significantly to customer satisfaction within selected public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda.

Assurance, in the analysis, was determined to have a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction ($B=0.228$, $P<0.05$). As demonstrated by the Beta coefficient, a one-unit change in assurance caused a 0.228-unit change in customer satisfaction. The aforementioned was in agreement with the study by (Nteere, 2023), uncovering a positive connection between assurance and satisfaction in a Nigerian context. Likewise, the work of Okocha et al. (2021) in Kenya revealed that perceived assurance from public employees correlated with increased citizen satisfaction. The observations by Adeyemi and Olaleye (2021) from Ghana similarly showed that a sense of security and competence among service providers influenced customer experiences. This result collectively showed the importance of instilled confidence for enhancing satisfaction in public services. This implies that improvement in assurance contributes significantly to customer satisfaction within selected public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda.

Tangibility, as the data showed, was another service quality element that was found to have a statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction ($B=0.191$, $P<0.05$). Evidenced by the Beta coefficient, each unit change in tangibility resulted in a 0.191-unit shift in customer satisfaction. The finding aligned with prior studies of Sharecho & Raghava (2022) demonstrated a direct correlation between the physical condition of facilities and public satisfaction in Ethiopia. Moreover, Tadesse & Yohannes (2019) showed within a Ethiopia context, that accessible infrastructure promoted more favorable views of the services. Likewise, research by Wambui and Njoroge (2021) in Ghana revealed that neat, clean, and well-maintained environments shaped positive user experiences. This result collectively showed the importance tangibility of readily available infrastructure and resources. This implies that improvement in tangibility contributes significantly to customer satisfaction within selected public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda.

Transparency, as was shown, exerted a statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction ($B=0.118$, $P<0.05$). The coefficient of 0.118 signified that each additional unit of transparency caused a 0.118-unit change in customer satisfaction. The aforementioned was in agreement with work of Hadi et al. (2019) discovered that heightened transparency correlated with stronger trust and satisfaction in public service. Similarly, Kenyan research by Naeem et al. (2021) revealed that honesty and open communication from public officials improved citizen confidence and satisfaction. Likewise, the results of Tsegaye and Bekele (2023) from Ethiopia demonstrated that transparency promoted accountability, which, in turn, led to better public perception. This result collectively showed the importance transparency of building public trust through open communication. This implies that improvement in transparency contributes significantly to customer satisfaction within public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda.

Empathy was discovered to have a statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction ($B=0.106$, $P<0.05$), demonstrating a positive correlation where a single unit increase in empathy resulted in a 0.106 unit increase in customer satisfaction. This finding resonated with earlier research, such as Okocha et al. (2021) who identified similar connections between compassion and patron loyalty in a Nigerian banking context. Similarly, the findings are consistent with Tadesse & Yohannes (2019) who discovered that empathic service delivery strongly predicted customer satisfaction in Kenyan public hospitals. Likewise, the study also concurrent with that of Alemayehu (2023), who discovered that the employee's displayed empathy improved customer satisfaction in Ethiopian restaurant. This result collectively showed the importance of empathy in enhancing customer satisfaction. Consequently, improvement in empathy is expected to contribute to significant gains in customer satisfaction within public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya woreda.

Finally, reliability was found to have a statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction ($B=0.093$, $P<0.05$). This demonstrated that a one-unit enhancement in reliability led to a 0.093-unit increase in customer satisfaction. The finding is in agreement with that of Sharecho & Raghava (2022), who discovered that reliable service positively influenced customer retention in Ghana's telecommunications sector. Similarly, the finding is consistent with that of Ayodele & Tunde (2022), who discovered that reliability in service delivery led to improved satisfaction in

Nigerian healthcare institutions. Likewise, the study also concurrent with that of Woldemichael (2024), who discovered that service-related dependability promotes long-term customer connections in Ethiopia's hospitality industry. This result collectively showed the importance of reliability in building strong customer relationships. Consequently, an improvement in reliability is anticipated to translate to greater customer satisfaction within selected public sector organizations in Soyama Zurya woreda.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigation embarked upon a comprehensive analysis of service quality's effect on customer satisfaction. The primary findings were carefully extracted from each of the six research objectives. A thorough summarization of the data was presented and discussed, accompanied by conclusions that were drawn from the research analysis. Furthermore, recommendations for both practical implementation and avenues for future research were formulated, directly correlating to each of the central research objectives.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study aimed to assess the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda. To achieve this, a research hypothesis was developed, and a questionnaire was designed to measure the relevant variables. The measurement scale was derived from a comprehensive review of existing literature. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed, with 322 (83.85%) returned and deemed suitable for analysis. SPSS version 26 was employed to analyze the data, and regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses.

The descriptive analysis revealed that all study variables—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, transparency, and customer satisfaction—scored between 2.61 and 3.40, indicating a state of "uncertainty" among respondents. This range, situated between disagreement and agreement, suggested that while efforts were made to enhance service quality, significant room for improvement remained in the selected public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda. These findings underscored the need for targeted interventions to address gaps in service delivery.

Pearson correlation analysis provided further insights into the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The results demonstrated strong positive correlations between customer satisfaction and tangibility ($r = 0.817$, $p \leq 0.01$), responsiveness ($r = 0.763$, $p \leq 0.01$), empathy ($r = 0.729$, $p \leq 0.01$), assurance ($r = 0.805$, $p \leq 0.01$), reliability ($r = 0.722$, $p \leq 0.01$), and transparency ($r = 0.727$, $p \leq 0.01$). These correlations highlighted the

critical role of service quality dimensions in shaping customer satisfaction within the studied organizations.

Regression analysis further reinforced these findings, revealing that the identified service quality dimensions accounted for 75.1% of the variance in customer satisfaction. Tangibility emerged as the most influential factor ($\text{Beta} = 0.312$), suggesting that improvements in this area could enhance customer satisfaction by 31.2%. Other significant predictors included responsiveness ($\text{Beta} = 0.201$), empathy ($\text{Beta} = 0.192$), assurance ($\text{Beta} = 0.156$), reliability ($\text{Beta} = 0.165$), and transparency. These results emphasized the importance of prioritizing service quality improvements to meet customer expectations effectively.

The hypothesis testing confirmed that all six service quality dimensions—tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, reliability, and transparency—had a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Consequently, all research hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and H6) were validated. These findings suggest that targeted enhancements in these dimensions are likely to yield higher levels of customer satisfaction in the studied public-sector organizations. The study concludes that improving service quality is essential for fostering customer satisfaction and recommends that public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda prioritize these areas to achieve better service outcomes.

5.2 Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to assess the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction in selected public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda. Based on the analysis results of this study, conclusions are drawn regarding the effect of reliability on customer satisfaction. The findings indicated that reliability had a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. This suggests that when public-sector organizations consistently deliver services as promised and maintain dependability, customers perceive higher satisfaction. However, the descriptive analysis revealed that the current level of reliability in the studied organizations fell within an uncertain range, indicating room for improvement. Public-sector organizations must prioritize consistent service delivery to enhance customer trust and satisfaction.

The second objective examined the effect of responsiveness on customer satisfaction. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between responsiveness and customer satisfaction. This implies that timely and efficient responses to customer needs and inquiries significantly enhance satisfaction levels. Despite this, the descriptive analysis showed that responsiveness also scored within the uncertain range, suggesting that while efforts have been made, further improvements are necessary. Organizations should focus on reducing response times and addressing customer concerns promptly to strengthen satisfaction.

The third objective aimed to determine the effect of assurance on customer satisfaction. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship, indicating that when employees demonstrate competence, courtesy, and credibility, customer satisfaction increases. Assurance plays a critical role in building customer confidence in the services provided. However, similar to other dimensions, assurance scored within the uncertain range, highlighting the need for targeted training programs to enhance employee skills and professionalism in public-sector organizations.

The fourth objective analyzed the effect of empathy on customer satisfaction. The results showed a strong positive correlation, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing individual customer needs. Empathy fosters a sense of care and personal attention, which significantly contributes to customer satisfaction. Despite this, the descriptive analysis indicated that empathy levels were still uncertain, suggesting that organizations need to adopt more customer-centric approaches to service delivery.

The fifth objective evaluated the effect of tangibility on customer satisfaction. The findings revealed that tangibility had the strongest predictive effect on customer satisfaction among all dimensions. This underscores the importance of physical facilities, equipment, and materials in shaping customer perceptions. However, the descriptive analysis showed that tangibility also fell within the uncertain range, indicating that while some efforts have been made, further investments in infrastructure and resources are necessary to meet customer expectations.

The sixth objective focused on the effect of transparency on customer satisfaction. The results demonstrated a significant positive relationship, highlighting the role of clear and open communication in building customer trust and satisfaction. Transparency ensures that customers

feel informed and valued, which enhances their overall experience. Like other dimensions, transparency scored within the uncertain range, suggesting that public-sector organizations need to adopt more transparent practices to improve customer satisfaction.

In conclusion, this study confirmed that all six dimensions of service quality—reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibility, and transparency—significantly influence customer satisfaction in selected public-sector organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda. The findings underscore the need for continuous improvement in these areas to enhance service delivery and customer experiences. By addressing the gaps identified in the study, public-sector organizations can build stronger relationships with their customers and achieve higher levels of satisfaction. The results provide a clear roadmap for leaders to prioritize service quality improvements and foster a customer-centric culture within their organizations.

5.3 Recommendations

The study's findings clearly demonstrated the significance of responsiveness on customer satisfaction. Therefore, this study recommends that the selected public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda implement systems to respond quickly to customer inquiries and concerns, ensuring an improved service experience.

As the findings indicate that assurance contributes significantly to customer satisfaction. Based on this result this research recommended public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda prioritize creating a secure and reliable environment. Providing consistent assurances will build greater trust, ultimately fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction in the public sectors organizations.

This study highlights those improvements in tangible aspects, such as facilities, equipment, and personnel appearance, positively affect customer satisfaction. Hence, this research recommends public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda to invest in enhancing the physical attributes of third services, ensuring a positive impression and higher satisfaction levels.

Transparency was found to have a strong relationship with customer satisfaction. Therefore, the study recommends that public sector organizations in Soyama zurya woreda increase their focus

on transparent communication practices, ensuring that customers have access to clear and honest information, ultimately boosting satisfaction and trust.

Empathy was proven to contribute to improved customer satisfaction by fostering strong relationships. It is therefore recommended that public sector organizations in Soyama zurya worda train employs to demonstrate genuine empathy, thereby improving customer service interactions and encouraging greater satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Reliability was identified as a key factor in customer satisfaction. The study recommends that public sector organizations in Soyama zurya worda enhance their reliability by ensuring consistency in service delivery. This will create a dependable experience, leading to sustained customer satisfaction and trust in the organizations.

5.4 Direction for Future Research

Building on the identified significance of transparency, future research could focus on exploring its underlying mechanisms across various public sector institutions. A specific focus should be focused on understanding how clear communication and inclusive decision-making processes improve customer satisfaction. It would be good to investigate whether the influence of transparency differs depending on organizational type or demographic characteristics. More nuanced insights could be obtained by employing various methodological approaches, thereby improving the literature on public sector service quality comprehensively and systemically.

Expanding the scope of the investigation to include a broader, more diverse sample could address current study constraints and encourage comparative analysis across cultural and regional contexts. Future research could also look into service quality dimensions specific to underserved regions to determine whether contextual differences influence outcomes. An interdisciplinary approach to integrating organizational behavior and public administration theories could also improve understanding. These efforts would not only increase generalizability, but would also encourage targeted strategies for increasing service quality within various public sector frameworks.

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many developments in the corporate context . The notions of commercialization strengthened after industrial. 2(2).

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APPENDIX I
JINKA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT
(QUESTIONNAIRE PREPARED FOR CUSTOMERS)

Dear Respondents,

This questionnaire aims to gather essential and relevant firsthand information for a research project titled “The Effect of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in the Case of Selected Public Sector Organizations in Soyama Zurya Woreda, Burji Zone” Prepared by Ato Tagash Soromo, an MSc candidate in Business Administration at Jinka University, this survey seeks your valuable input to ensure the success of the study. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, used exclusively for academic purposes. Please provide honest answers, as your cooperation is crucial. For any inquiries, you may contact Tagash Soromo at 09-16-51-22-00.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Note:

- 1, No need of writing of your name on questionnaire
- 2, please return the completed questionnaire in time.

Section I: Questionnaires’ Related To Demographic Character of the Respondent

Instructions: Please put a tick mark “√” in front of the boxes of your choice once only to the following questions. Your answers will help us understand the demographic characteristics of participants. All information is confidential and used solely for academic purposes

1. What is your age group?: 1. Under 30 years ☐ 2. 31-40 years ☐ 3. 41-50 years ☐ 4. 51-60 years ☐ 5. Over 60 years ☐
2. What is your gender?: 1. Male ☐ 2. Female ☐

3. What is your highest level of education completed?: 1. No formal education 2. Primary school ☐ 3. Secondary school ☐ 4. Bachelor's degree ☐ 5. Master's degree ☐
4. What is your employment status?: 1. Employee (private / public organization) ☐ 2. Merchant ☐ 3. Farmer ☐ 4. Unemployed ☐
5. How frequently do you utilize the services of public sector organizations?: 1. Weekly ☐ 2. Monthly ☐ 3. Rarely ☐
6. How satisfied are you with the service quality provided by these organizations?: 1. Very Dissatisfied ☐ 2. Dissatisfied ☐ 3. Neutral ☐ 4. Satisfied ☐ 5. Very Satisfied ☐
7. What is your primary reason for engaging with public sector organizations?: 1. To access essential services (health, education, etc.) 2. For administrative purposes 3. To seek information or advice 4. To lodge complaints or feedback 5. Other (please specify)

Section II: Service Quality Questionnaire

Please tick the number that you feel most appropriate, using the scale from 1 to 5 (Where 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= uncertain; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly Agree).

| No | Tangibles (physical appearance of facilities and materials) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The organization's physical appearance meets my expectations. | | | | | |
| 2 | The facility is clean and well-maintained. | | | | | |
| 3 | The building and surroundings are visually appealing. | | | | | |
| 4 | The waiting area is comfortable and pleasant. | | | | | |
| 5 | The office space is organized and accessible. | | | | | |
| 6 | The service environment is always clean and attractive. | | | | | |
| No | Responsiveness (willingness to help customers promptly) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | Employees respond quickly to my service requests. | | | | | |
| 2 | Staff members are willing to assist me immediately. | | | | | |
| 3 | My inquiries are responded to without delay. | | | | | |
| 4 | Employees handle my issues quickly and efficiently. | | | | | |
| 5 | The service staff reacts to my requests fast. | | | | | |
| 6 | The response time is always quick and effective. | | | | | |

| No | Empathy (personalized care and attention) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employees treat me with respect and courtesy. | | | | | |
| 2 | Staff members listen to my concerns attentively. | | | | | |
| 3 | I feel valued by the organization's staff. | | | | | |
| 4 | The organization provides personalized service to me. | | | | | |
| 5 | Staff members are empathetic toward my concerns. | | | | | |
| 6 | The organization ensures personalized attention during service. | | | | | |
| No | Assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | Employees appear knowledgeable about the services offered. | | | | | |
| 2 | The service staff shows expertise in handling issues. | | | | | |
| 3 | Employees' professionalism makes me trust their work. | | | | | |
| 4 | The staff confidently answers all of my questions. | | | | | |
| 5 | Employees are well-trained to handle my requests. | | | | | |
| 6 | The organization's staff instills confidence in their services. | | | | | |
| No | Reliability (dependability and consistency of services) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | I always receive dependable service from the organization. | | | | | |
| 2 | I rely on the organization for quality service. | | | | | |
| 3 | Services are delivered as promised and expected. | | | | | |
| 4 | The organization fulfills its promises consistently. | | | | | |
| 5 | The service quality remains reliable in all situations. | | | | | |
| 6 | The service is consistently available when needed. | | | | | |
| No | Perceived Transparency (clarity and openness of communication) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 1 | The service process is transparent and easy to follow. | | | | | |
| 2 | Information regarding services is always available and transparent. | | | | | |
| 3 | Employees openly share important service information with me. | | | | | |
| 4 | The organization provides clear information about costs. | | | | | |
| 5 | Staff members offer transparent answers to my queries. | | | | | |
| 6 | The organization is open and honest with customers. | | | | | |

Section III: Customer satisfaction questioner

Please tick the number that you feel most appropriate, using the scale from 1 to 5 (Where 1= Not Satisfied; 2= Slightly Satisfied; 3= Satisfied; 4= Very Satisfied; 5= Extremely Satisfied).

| No | Customer Satisfaction | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I am satisfied with employee responses to inquiries. | | | | | |
| 2 | Service provided was worth the time spent waiting. | | | | | |
| 3 | The service made my experience pleasant and enjoyable. | | | | | |
| 4 | I am pleased with the assistance received | | | | | |
| 5 | I am satisfied with the results of services obtained | | | | | |
| 6 | My experience was convenient and efficient in overall delivery | | | | | |