

**ASSESSMENT ON SERVICE QUALITY IN MAIL HANDLING OF ETHIOPIAN
POSTAL SERVICE (IN CASE OF WOLKITE POST OFFICE)**



WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

COLLAGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO DEPARTEMENT OF MANAGEMENT IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT FOR THE BACHELOR ART DEGREE IN MANAGEMENT**

BY: - ZEKARIYAS TADE

ADVISOR: - Mr. MIKIAS METIKU (MA)

**DECEMBER 2020
WOLITE, ETHIOPIA**

Acknowledgement

First of all I would like to express my deepest thanks to almighty GOD and his mother SAINT MARRY for their presence in all my life, works and me strength for my academic achievements. Next to GOD, my special gratitude and heart full appreciation goes to my advisor Mikias Meteku (MA) for his assistance and smooth communication throughout the preparation of this study. I am also indebted to my honorable family indeed my mother Emamu Moges.

Abstract

This research is conducted on the assessment on service quality in mail handling Ethiopian postal office. The research was carried out mainly to find the major problem of service quality in Wolkite Post office. Service quality has its own impact on customer's satisfaction of Wolkite post office. The objectives of the study has assessed the service quality in mail handling of Ethiopian postal service in case of Wolkite branch to analysis and evaluate its service quality on customer satisfaction. The study has assessed the service quality in mail handling of Ethiopian postal service in case of Wolkite branch. The study is significant to Wolkite post office to identify problems that hinder the post office and take correct measures. The study was used both qualitative and quantitative techniques by using both primary and secondary source of data to collect information about the service quality of the post office. The methods that are to collect the necessary information are questioner. The questioners was distributed for the 55 sample respondents. The results was analyzed through descriptive method of data analysis by using tables and pie charts. Finally the researcher was interpreting the data in understandable and communicable manners to the readers and was put his own conclusion and recommendations.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In today's increasingly competitive environment, quality service and customer satisfaction are critical to any organizations which is striving for profit or nonprofit (Kumasey, 2014). This means any firms success is attributed to its customer satisfaction as customers are also becoming more knowledgeable and sophisticated in demanding for their rights that is partly attributed to technological expansion. Kimanjo and Njogu (2012,) customer satisfaction is the route to sustained high performance. Hence, as long as the organization is dealing with providing service or offering goods, the big picture is satisfaction of customer.

Hence, organizations strive to achieve human need as satisfaction of human need results in better performance. Satisfaction of human need in service sector is providing quality service. The research by Kumasey (2014) indicates that service quality significantly and positively related with customer satisfaction. Thus, the driver to customer satisfaction is the perceived level of service in service sector. However, quality in service is not as easy as that of quality goods because for service the point of production and consumption is the same and the elements of quality that are considered by customer are not precisely defined. This constitutes difficulty in service sector quality issue. Nonetheless, undoubtedly, customer satisfaction is considered to be the most important factor whether it is meant for a product or a service (Murambi and Bwisa 2014).

Public sector organizations have come under increasing pressure to deliver quality services (Randall and Senior, 1994) and improve efficiencies (Robinson, 2003). Customer needs and expectations are changing when it comes to governmental services and their quality requirements. However, service quality practices in public sector organizations is slow and is further exacerbated by difficulties in measuring outcomes, greater scrutiny from the public and press, a lack of freedom to act in an arbitrary fashion and a requirement for decisions to be based

on law (Teicher., 2002). Therefore this descriptive study is aimed at assessing the service quality of mail handling in Ethiopian Postal office. Service quality is a critical component of customers' perception because it is an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Customer expectations may be described as the desires or wants of the consumer. It is the expectations the customer expects from the organization and its range of products or services, i.e. what customers feel the organization should offer them. There are some literatures on customer satisfaction and quality services in our countries different public services but not that much on the postal service sector. We can observe a knowledge gap in the postal office employees because of they are not more educated and it is obvious to have a difference between the management and other workers

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Assess service quality on mail handling is inevitable to be in a better stance for addressing problems related to mail handling. Presently, Postal Service is still too far to match effects of competition and technological change. This in turn reduces mail handling quality service. For example, the number of pieces of mail delivered failed from time to time (Zeithaml V.A 2009).

Assessment of service delivery in public sector got slight considerations in academic literature. So, this study is important to fill this gap in the literature. Furthermore the importance of this study is enhanced by its contribution to policy makers, consultants, government agencies and other parties who might use the output of the study.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- A) What is the response of customers on the Dimensions of service quality of Ethiopian postal service in branch of Wolkite post office?
- B) What is the response of customers on the service quality practices of Ethiopian postal service in branch of Wolkite post office?
- C) What are the major problems that hinder the Ethiopian postal services to upgrade its services quality in branch of Wolkite post office?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study assessed service quality in mail handling Ethiopian postal service in case of Wolkite Post Office.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- 1, to evaluate the Dimensions of service quality of Ethiopian postal service in branch of Wolkite post office.
2. To examine the service quality practices of Ethiopian postal service in branch of Wolkite post office.
3. To find out the major problems that hinders the Ethiopian postal services to upgrade its service quality in branch of Wolkite post office.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significant of the study is to assess the service quality in mail handling of Wolkite post office. It is also hoped that results of this study improves policy makers, planners, consultants and researchers to understand about customer satisfaction in the study area and endow with an important clue especially for future researchers. The result of the study is expected to benefit the post office to improve service delivery and take corrective action based on the finding in the study. The significance of this study is further enhanced considering the fact that research around customer satisfaction especially in public service sector is at its infant stage in Ethiopia. For practitioners, this study is relevant and of a good deal to individuals who are at the management position of different government offices and other people who are dealing with customer satisfaction in the country.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was delaminate geographically; conceptually and methodologically. This study was not targeted to study in all branches of Ethiopian postal service only in wolkite post office focus because it require a huge amount of resource, time, money, manpower and other resources and also the study was access the service quality in mail handling activities and to analyze for service quality.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is reviewing some of the most influential literature related to the study. Thus, this chapter covers conceptual definitions of quality mail, definitions of quality mail handling, objective and activities of the Mail circulation Department that describe quality mail handling service process and methods of mail circulation in an organization.

2.1. SERVICE QUALITY

Before describing the service quality let us look what service and quality is separately. Service is an activity that is rendered by service providers to customers. In addition, quality frequently is definition most people have in mind when they think of quality.

The postal sector might play an important role in the national economy if the right services are provided in a qualitative and appropriate manner. The development of postal service in Ethiopia is guided by the vision that the population thought the country must be provided access to affordable, reliable and excellent postal services. To clearly put about service quality we are trying to examine how the different authors say about the quality of service.

Adrian Palmer & Cole (1995) defines service is as “activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything.” Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.

Service quality is defined differently by various Authors for Example, Palmer & Code 1995) defined it “Conforming to requirements.” They also defined as “the extent to which a service meets customers’ requirement.” Once these specifications are established, the quality goal of the various functions of an organization is to comply strictly with them. If quality is defined as the extent to which a service meets customers’ requirements are. The general absence of easily understood criteria for assessing quality makes articulations of customers’ requirements and communication of the quality level offered much more difficult than with goods. Service quality

is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction, which in turn has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

Quality of service as defined by Arora (1999) is as quality of the work performed is checked with reference to the planned quality. Just as a factory must take steps to ensure that the quality of the product is on par with the planned quality, it is also necessary for the office to see that the quality of its service is maintained at a satisfactory level. Quality of office work is reflected through:- Accuracy, celerity, Effectiveness and Economy

Arora (1999) indicates quality control in the office arises chiefly on account of the following factors:-

- I. Quality control saves on time spent on a job.
- II. Economy expenses will decrease as result of swiftness
- III. Profitability increases because work done accurately is not to be re-done.
- IV. Accuracy and promptness - create goodwill for the organization in the minds of all the outsiders who deal with it. Thus the organization grows; Employees' moral also improves since they take pride in the work done by them.

2.2. DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Quality is clearly an important but complex concept. Recently, service organizations have recognized that although quality is a means of gaining competitive advantage, it cannot be satisfactorily measured by a series of isolated ad hoc studies. Instead, organizations need comprehensive programs to research customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality.

After extensive research, Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry found five dimensions customers use when evaluating service quality. They named their survey instrument SERVQUAL. The five SERVQUAL dimensions are:

- **Reliability:** ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
- **Tangibles:** appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication.

- **Responsiveness:** willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- **Assurance:** knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- **Empathy:** caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Service providers decide upon a target level of service quality and then communicate the level of service offered to both consumers and employees. Thus allows an employee to know what is expected of them, and customers have an idea of the level of service they can expect. The SERVQUAL model highlights the difficulties in ensuring a high quality of service for all customers in all situations most specifically. It identifies five gaps where there may be a shortfall between expectation of service level and perception of actual service delivery.

Gap1: Gap between consumer expectations and Management perception. Management may think that they know what consumers want and proceed to deliver it when in fact consumers may expect something quite different.

Gap2: Gap between management perception and service quality specification. Management may not set quality specification or may not set them clearly, alternatively, management may set clear quality specification but they may not be achievable.

Gap3: Gap between quality specifications and service delivery.

Unforeseen problems or poor management can lead to failure of a service provider to meet service quality specifications. This may be due to human error but also to mechanical breakdown of facilitating or support goods.

Gap4: Gap between service delivery and external communications.

There may be dissatisfaction with a service because of the excessively heightened expectations developed through the service provider's communication efforts. Dissatisfaction occurs when actual delivery does not meet up to the expectations held out in a company communications.

Gap 5: Gap between perceived service and expected service

This gap occurs as a result of one or more of the previous gaps. The way in which customers perceive actual service delivery does not match up with their internal expectations. (Palmer and Cole (1995) Ericsson (1987) indicate Quality customer satisfaction. Without satisfied customers we are dead. We could also say that without our employee, our products and our systems we are dead. This is just as true! However, there is heavy competition in all our markets and we have to try and be best both with respect to products/services and relations with customers.

2.3. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE QUALITY

It is known that every organization should have its own vision and mission to fulfill its goal. The goals are established based on guidelines or principles that are believed to meet customers' satisfaction. EPSE has principles that have the form of every service giving organization.

In relation to top service givers companies' principles Denton (1998) lists the following principles which are as he says. "The heart and soul of quality service":-

- Principle 1 Managerial vision
- Principle 2 develop a strategic niche
- Principle 3 top management must demonstrate support
- Principle 4 understand your business
- Principle 5 apply operational fundamental
- Principle 6 understands, respect, and monitor the customer
- Principle 7 use appropriate technology
- Principle 8 the need to innovate
- Principle 9 hires the right people
- Principle 10 provide skill-based training
- Principle 11 set standards, measure, performance, and act
- Principle 12 establish incentives

The above principles apply to EPS making use of its own terminologies in its units such as letter post, Parcel post, EMS, financial and marketing departments.

Many other places where other activities directly connected with the operation of Ethiopia's postal services are carried on or performed.

2.4 DEFINITION OF POST OFFICE, MAIL AND MAIL CIRCULATION

2.4.1. Post office

It is an office that provides a postal service to the general population. According to proclamation No.240 of 1966, post office shall mean "The department of the ministry charged with principal responsibility for operating the postal service and general for carrying out the provisions of the proclamation. The post office shall be deemed to include every house, room and vehicle or place where or in which postal articles are received, delivered, sorted, made up, dispatched or conveyed, and many other place where other activities directly connected with the operation of Ethiopia's postal services are carried on or performed".

2.4.2. Mail

Mail is a method for transmitting information and tangible objects where in written documents typically enclosed in envelopes and also small packages are delivered to destination around the world.

2.4.3. Mail circulation

It defined as the process that messages are transmitted through the post offices. It may also define as the bags of letters and packages that are transported by the postal service.

2.4.4. Purpose of quality mail handling

The aim of this research is improve operational standards by ensuring faster and reliable mail circulation so as to raise quality of service. Change is a fact of life. The capacity to grasp change has to be foremost asset of any organization since it is a hinge for a success.

Historically, mail volume growth rates have tracked increases in the overall communications marketplace. In the past few years, however, mail volumes are steadily declining. This is not something to be viewed as a breakdown, but a trend that is likely to continue.

Electronic alternatives such as e-mail and access to web-based information are gradually diverting regular mail volume.

A concurrent reaction has to be made to reduce the impact of electronic communication on mail volume. This can be affected in different ways, one being making use of electronic communication itself, and the other one, improving the quality of the existing postal service. Quality of service implies that mail must be reliable, timely and trusted.

Since post office is a service giving organization, it is worthwhile to know existing postal quality of service, the standard of the service, and determine customer needs. Increased competition and higher customer expectations continue to place pressure on posts to make improvements on the quality of their products and services. In post office, quality of service requires to meet the five principle quality of mail circulation that is: - speed, security, reliability, fair price and accessibility.

2.5. OBJECTIVE OF QUALITY MAIL HANDLING

The contributions quality of mail circulation makes to organizational effectiveness include the following: helping the organization reach its goals, improve customer satisfaction, improve operation standards by ensuring faster and reliable mail circulation so as to raise quality of service and security aspects of mail (i.e. damage, losses, etc.)

2.6. MAIL HANDLING FUNCTION

Mail Handling Department is composed of several groups of interrelated activities. All managers with mail handling Department responsibility must consider legal, political economic, Social, cultural and technological forces when addressing these activities.

2.6.1. Handover of outward dispatches

Outgoing mail is handed over to handlers. They check the number of bags, and condition the bags and sign to show that the mail is intact at the time of handover, the handover place about one hour before departure of the flight. After the ground handler has received bags. Airport

security escorts the mails to the airfield. Because of these proper handle arrangements, there is almost no problem with outgoing mail.

2.6.2. Handover of inward dispatches

Incoming mail is brought to the mailing unit after offloading from the plane. Handlers the mail and it is escorted to the mailing unit by airport security. There the mail bags are cloth and then taken to the General Post Office, where the mail is opened and sort the mailing unit during handover, mail bags are checked by the postal officer together handlers and airport security. They check if the mail is intact; if there is any irregularity a loose seal, a cut of if the weight is deferent from the documented.

2.6.3. Mail Storage Condition

The postal officer mail arriving at night is escorted airport security and locked up in the storage container. Two keys to this container are kept. One is kept by the postal officer and the other by handlers. The following day early in the morning mail is handed over to the postal officer through the procedures detailed above.

2.6.4. Mail transport conditions and frequency form sorting center to Airport and vice versa

An official truck is used to transport mail to and from the Airport. This is done four times a day in addition to conveying international mail. There is also domestic mail conveyed by air which is taken to and from the airport

2.6.5. Security of Mail

There are good security measures at the mailing unit. Anybody entering the sorting center at General post office has to store their bag at the entrance to avoid theft. All officers are physically checked at the entrance men by a male security officer and female staff by a lady security officer. The sorting office also has camera surveillance. At the mailing unit, for anybody vesting arrangement have to be made in advance to obtain an “Airport Passport” to be able to enter the premises.

There are almost no problems with outgoing mail. The few problems concerning incoming mail might be in the hands of carriers. Everybody leaving the sorting center mailing unit is also check.

2.7. DEFINITIONS OF PRINCIPLES BY POST OFFICE

Principle: is a guideline that helps to perform general activity of any organization based on the above definition. Post office stated and defines five principles as follows:-

Speed: is one of the aspects of postal quality. It is the transmission times between the origin of postal exchange office and the destination of postal exchange office. Universal postal Union puts delivery standards within the city, within the regions and international levels.

Security: In postal concept, is the arrival of postal items from the sender to the receiver without any damage and safety? It also deals with the safety of work environment in terms of its suitability for the health of postal workers, the standards of buildings and vehicles that are used for the postal service.

Security of mail in sorting center can be served by leaving visitor's bag at the entrance. In that way, theft can be prevented. At the headquarters building of the entrance and second check is done using a metal detector to keep security of premises.

Postal Security activities are an essential part of postal operations, as they provide postal services with an important tool for improving and maintaining the quality of services offered to customers.

Reliability: In postal concept, is related term with security? It is because it makes customers reliable on the service by sending their items in-tact (without any loss or damage). Hence, it is related with the faith of customers in relation to the service they render.

Fair Price: Postal Service as any service provider endeavors to ascertain all range of customers to use the service at a fair price which has considered their income any living standard.

Accessibility: In postal service accessibility deals with the provision of postal services to all groups of people from city to remote area dwellers at a reasonable distance range.

These principles are the core targets to fulfill the achievement of the postal quality of service.

2.8. DELIVERY STANDARDS

Ethiopia is one of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union. Therefore, according to the rules and regulation laid down in the convention, Ethiopia is bound to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations which are subject to ratification.

The effective management of these issues in a post office will ensure that the real cost of time can be accurately established so that sound business decisions can then be made as top resources which are appropriate to be allocated to deal with the problem. This can contribute toward a more economic, efficient, and effective postal service, to the benefit of both customers and staff. As Ericsson (1987) point out the important items constituting delivery quality are:

- ✓ Being on time, delivering when we has promised.
- ✓ Delivering according to specification.
- ✓ Delivering at the right place.
- ✓ Delivering everything
- ✓ Delivering undamaged goods.
- ✓ Delivering with the right documents. The complaints that are most often raised by subsidiaries, the installation force and the customers are associated with Delivery Quality. The management of Ericsson therefore made delivery precision a priority issue

2.9. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research to identify different types of attributes service quality in mail handling of postal service to its customers and how they affect the customer satisfaction. To assess whether by offering reward employee motivated to performance of provided the service evaluation.

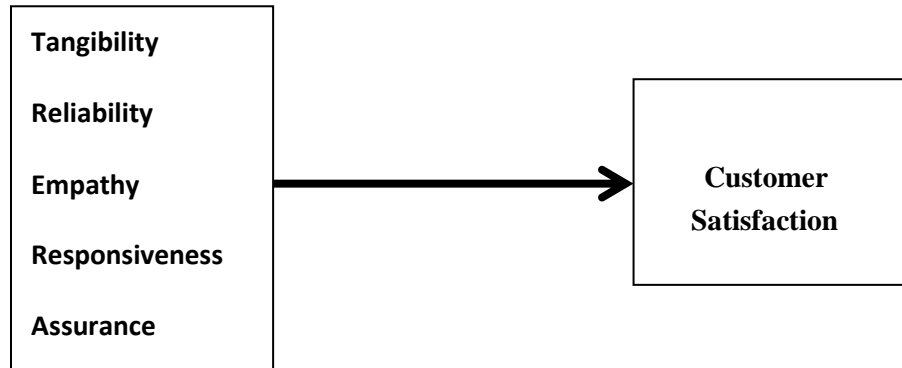


FIGURE 2. 1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.10. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

According to Negi, (2009, p.33), the idea of linking service quality and customer satisfaction has existed for a long time. He carried a study to investigate the relevance of customer-perceived service quality in determining customer overall satisfaction in the context of mobile services (telecommunication) and he found out that reliability and network quality (an additional factor) are the key factors in evaluating overall service quality but also highlighted that tangibles, empathy and assurance should not be neglected when evaluating perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. This study was based only on a specific service product in telecom industry (mobile service) and we think it is very important to identify and evaluate those factors which contribute significantly to determination of customer-perceived service quality and overall satisfaction. Researchers have yet to come to conclusion on the antecedents to service quality and satisfaction.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher was used descriptive research design. Descriptive research describes and interprets what exists and focuses on the present time. The main tool for measuring the characteristic of the samples in a descriptive research was used survey. The researcher was used statistical surveys to gather data about people and their thoughts and behaviors. The other reason to use descriptive research approach was to look into the existing service quality. The study was applied qualitative and quantitative (questionnaire) approach.

3.2. TARGET POPULATION

The target population of this study were the customers of Ethiopian postal office in Wolkite branch. Thus the main information was collected from customer of Wolkite post office. Since the number of total customers were 120 in Wolkite post office.

3.3. SOURCE OF DATA

The researcher was used both primary and secondary data for the accomplishment of the study. Primary data was collected from customers of the Wolkite post office. Thus the data was collected through questionnaire.

3.4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The customer of postal service is huge in number and there is no recorded data on their total. Thus, since the total population of the study is not known, the sample size that has be taken is arbitrary as is well implemented by other studies. In this study, there is infinite (very large) population size in other words, it is impossible to have a of population members. Thus 55

respondents have been taken as sample because this is the minimum amount of sample that is accepted by different statistical software.

The technique of identifying individual respondent in the study shall be also stated. In this study, the investigator employed sampling method. I.e. there is fluctuating numbers some time and there might not be repetitive visit. Thus, has use non-probability sampling, respondents who have time and can give sufficient information was contacted. By using the final size for each of the category or group was determined with taro yemane in 1967 formula

The researcher would use **90%** level of confidence and **10%** level of significance so, the given is
C sample size

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n= Sample size

N= Total population

e= Sampling error

I will be take e^2 at the confidence level of 90% -10%

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{120}{1 + 120(0.1)^2}$$

$$n = 55$$

3.5 .DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The study was used primary and secondary data to achieve the objective. Primary was collected from customers of the Wolkite post office. Thus the data was collected through questionnaire.

Primary data was collected through questionnaires and prepared with the following response formats; dichotomous response e.g. yes/no, multiple choice and ranking response which has been collected by the researcher through direct question and answer with customers of the Wolkite post office.

3.6. METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The method of data analysis was descriptive statistics. The rationale behind for choose of this method of data analysis is described. The study was used both quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative data are open ended, question and quantitative data are table and percentage. Data analysis interprets to assess service quality in mail handling in Ethiopia. A descriptive analysis was carried out used simple table, pie chart and percentage distribution.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section deals with the finding and discussion part of the collected data on the assessment of service quality in mail handling Ethiopian postal service Wolkite branch. In this chapter the researchers tried to discuss and analyzed the primary and secondary data by using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis method. The secondary data was collected from books, internet and the like. The primary data was collected through questioner from 30 respondents.

4.2 BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

TABLE 1: BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Items	Option	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	33	60
	Female	22	40
	Total	55	100
Age	Below 19	6	11
	20-29	28	51
	30-39	11	20
	40-49	9	16
	Above 50	1	2
	Total	55	100

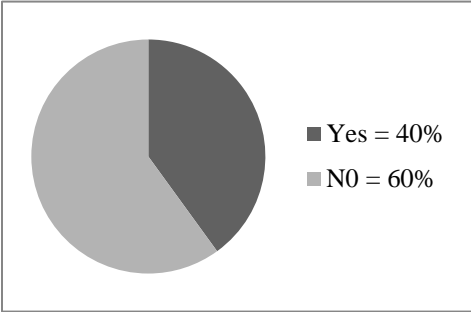
Educational qualification	Below 10 th Grade	0	0
	10 th - 12 th complete	7	13
	Certificate	6	11
	College Diploma	11	20
	B.A degree	22	40
	Above B.A degree	9	16
	Total	55	100
Number of years as customer	5 year and below	16	29
	6-10	22	40
	11-15	11	20
	Over 16 years	6	11
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUESTIONARIS, 2020

The above table 1 of the chapter presented the demographic background of the customer that is using the postal services. When looking into the gender of the customer 60% of them are male and the remaining 40% is female. There is some balance between the male and female customers. Looking into the age composition of the customers, below 19 has taken 11 %, 20-29 has share of 51%, 30-39 has share of 20%, 40-49 has share of 16% and the remaining range the age of 50 and above has taken the smallest of all that is 2%. Thus the age range that has the highest customers is 20 to 29. As far as the educational background of customers is concerned,

the entire customers hold grade 10-12 completed and above with the largest proportion of customers holding BA Degree with 40%. When we look into the number of years that customers spent with the postal office, below 5 year covers 29%, 6-10 years share 40%, 11-15 year share 20% and above 16 years share 11% of the customers have attachment with the postal office. Almost the majority have consumed the service for more than 5 years. Thus it can be assumed that, they can provide the detail information on the service quality of the post office.

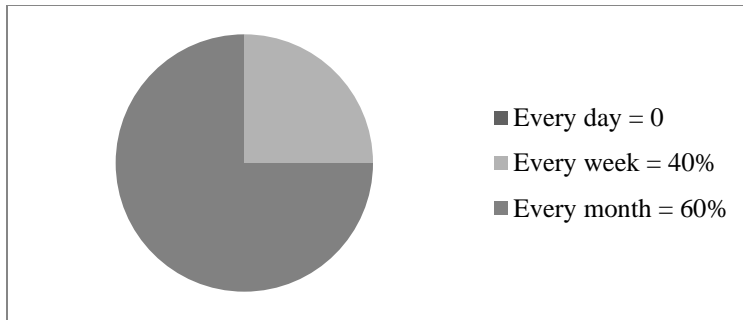
FIGURE 4. 1: DO YOU HAVE PRIVATE P.O.BOX?



SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above figure depicts if the customers sampled have private P.O BOX. Thus, 22 (40%) of them replied that they have their own private box which they receive their mail on different time. Whereas the remaining 55 (60%) replied that they do not have their own the private box for service. Overall, majority of customers do not have private box the reason why they do not have is not interested in different communication technology and they have not interesting to pay the payment of private p.o.box for the post office. However, some customers have their own private box and the reason why they have their own private p.o.box is they are interested in different communication technology and they are paying the payment of private p.o.box for the post office.

FIGURE 4. 2 HOW OFTEN DO YOU CHECK YOUR P.O.BOX?



SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above pie chart indicates the frequency of checking the mail box by the people who own the private P.O.BOX 22(40%) every week, 33(60%) and no or (0%) every day check post box. Thus it shows that more customers check their mail box monthly and weekly than daily. Thus it has reduced the dependency on the mail box to be involved in communication. Check the post box more customer (60%) is every week. Thus, it is recommended for customers to tie up with the urgency of the problem that they receive than making the checking time regular.

4.3 RESPONDENTS ON THE SERVICE QUALITY PRACTICES OF THE POST OFFICE.

TABLE 2: have you receive your mail on time

Have you received you letter, parcel or EMS on time?	Options/response	Frequency	Percentage %
	Yes	15	27
	No	18	33
	Not sure	22	40
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

Thus from the above table, one can observe that the customers of the Wolkite postal office are not satisfied by the service that they are receiving currently those covers 18 customer or 33%.

This number of customers 22(40%) who are not sure of the timing of the service. Only 15 (27%) supported of customers proved that they receive their message on time. Thus, the postal office needs to revisit the service package that it is offering to its customer especially in the current time where technology is becoming a substitute for some type of service it offers.

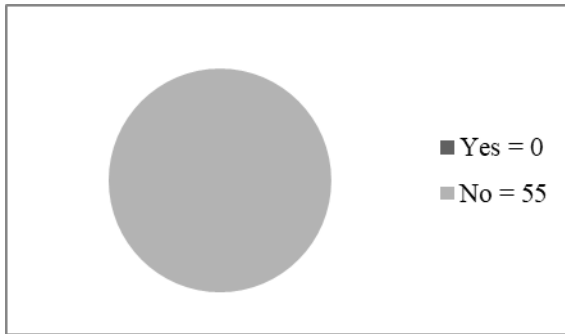
TABLE 3: Messages Not Received on Time

If not yes which one (parcel, letter, EMS)?	Response	Frequency	Percentage%
	Letter	31	56
	Parcel	24	44
	EMS	0	0
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

From the above table those who responds that not receiving our mail on time are 55 customers, from this customer observed who do not receive their letter on time are 56% (31 customers) and customers who do not receive parcel on time are 44% (24 customers). From this it can be concluded that the postal office customers have doubt on the timely availability of their messages through time. Thus this indicates that there is gap that the postal office needs to look in enhancing the service quality of its customers. So, it is recommended for the postal office to improve the time at which message reaches the customer

FIGURE 4. 3: DID YOU RECEIVE MESSAGE THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU?



SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above figure clearly speaks that the customers do not have received the message that does not belong to their affair. Thus all of the respondents (100%) replied that they received only messages that are directed to them. This indicates that the employees when locating the messages in the inbox of customers are giving care in arranging and directing the messages. So, it is recommended to uphold such kind of services and caring for fare of customers.

TABLE 4: EMPLOYEES HANDLING OF CUSTOMERS AT OFFICE

	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How the rate of the post service employee handling of customer at office	Very high	6	11
	High	11	20
	Medium	20	36
	Low	16	29
	Very low	2	4
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above table tells how customers rate the way employees' handle the issues that are related with the customers. Thus accordingly, the rate that they responded is 11%, 20%, 36%, 29% and

4% respectively for very high, high, medium, low and very low. This indicates that the employees are not much caring for their customers when interacting in the office. Hence, the customers of the postal office are not getting enough attention from the employees of the organization. So, improving this has significance for the postal office sustainability.

TABLE 5: Has Your Letter, Parcel or EMS Got Lost?

Has your letter, parcel or EMS got lost sent To you?	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Yes	15	27
	No	40	73
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above table indicates if the customers have experienced loss of their message before delivery. Accordingly 15(27%) of them replied yes, and 40 (73%) replied no. majority of customers do not have such kind of experience. However, the number of customers who replied they have got their message lost is not insignificant. Thus, greater attention must be given by the postal office to keep the customers satisfaction improving and avoidance of risk associated with it. The respondents who replied yes have listed various reasons in which they were not able to receive their messages. These are some of them qualitatively. The mail is lost/ robed, the mail is damaged, the mail is not sent, missing post box key, not treated well by worker, workers are not found on working time, not receiving mail on time. And finally they said that the post office ask apologize for the problem and pay indemnification for their damaged property and the post office put try to solve the problem.

4.4 RESPONSE OF RESPONDENTS ON THE DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN THE POST OFFICE

TABLE 6: HOW DO YOU RATE THE RELIABILITY OF SERVICE AT THE POSTAL OFFICE?

How do you rate the reliability of service in Wolkite postal service	Rates/response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Very high	6	11
	High	11	20
	Medium	16	29
	Low	18	33
	Very low	4	7
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

Table 6 of the above indicates the rate that respondents given to the Ethiopian postal service tin Wolkite branch. Accordingly, 11% respondent rate very high, 20% respondent rated high, 30% respondent rated medium and the remaining 33% and 7% responded low and very low respectively, Therefore, the reliability of service at the Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch is found to be below the average depending on the response of the sample respondents. Thus, wolkite postal service needs to design the service system that accelerates the current reliability of service.

TABLE 7: HOW DO YOU RATE THE RESPONSIVENESS OF SERVICE QUALITY AT WOLKITE POSTAL SERVICE?

How do you rate the responsiveness of Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch?	Rates/response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Very high	7	13
	High	11	20
	Medium	16	29
	Low	15	27

	Very low	6	11
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

Table 7 of the above indicated that responsiveness of the postal office to customers. Responsiveness is one of the major service packages that customers expect from the organization providing service. Thus accordingly, 13%, 20%, 29%, 27%, and 11% of customers rated very high, high, medium, low and very low respectively. Again the aggregate result of the response indicates below average in responsiveness. Thus, it is recommended for the postal service to improve the responsiveness to its customers through various mechanisms that can enhance their rate.

TABLE 8: HOW DO YOU RATE THE ASSURANCE OF SERVICE QUALITY AT WOLKITE POSTAL OFFICE?

Rate/Response	Frequency	Percentage%
Very high	9	16
High	15	27
Medium	11	20
Low	18	33
Very low	2	4
Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

Table 8 of the above indicates that the assurance of service provided at the Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch is not worst but it needs attention as other service dimension. The response of customers who were sampled looks like 9, 15, 11, 18, and 2 for very high, high, medium, low and very low respectively. Hence as the general view, there is the gap that can be improved and the office need to revisit its service quality considering the above mentioned dimensions as the clue for further improvement.

The respondents were asked to put some suggestion on how the postal office could improve its service. Some of them are compiled as follows. Improving the time at which messages arrive from where they are sent. Making the delivery of EMS faster than the current delivery rate, timely conducting the review of problems that emerge from the service encounter, using /introducing technology in different areas that can support the service facility of the office like email alert, identifying the need of different customer that want varied services and etc.

TABLE 9: How do you rate the empathy of Wolkite postal service?

How do you rate the empathy of Wolkite post office	Rate/response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Very high	11	20
	High	6	9
	Medium	17	31
	Low	17	31
	Very low	6	9
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above Table 9 indicates the empathy of the wolkite postal service to customers. This is the level of attention paid to individual customers in the office. Accordingly, 20% of customers responded very high, 9% of respondents said that it is high, 31% of them said it is medium and 31% and 9% of respondents said that it is low and very low. Thus the average customers said it is good. Thus it is recommended for Ethiopian postal service to improve the level of empathy to customers more than it does currently.

TABLE 10: how do you rate the tangibles of the Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite Branch?

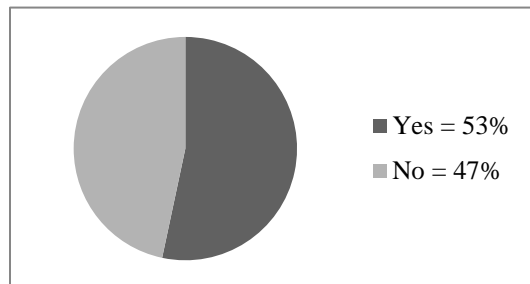
How can you rate the tangibility of Wolkite post office	Rate/response	frequency	Percentage(%)
	Very high	6	11
	High	16	29
	Medium	18	33
	Low	11	20
	Very low	4	7
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUESTIONARIS, 2020

Table 10 of the above indicates how customers rate the tangibles of Ethiopian postal service in wolkite post office. Thus, accordingly, 11%, 29%, and 33% of respondents rated it as very high, high and medium. Whereas the remaining 20% and 7% rated as low and very low respectively. From this it could be concluded that 50% of respondents said that the tangibles are below the average/medium indicating the room. To solve this the post office can give attention for the problems that can appear in the post office.

4.5 RESPONDENTS ON PROBLEMS THAT HINDER THE SERVICE QUALITY OF THE POST OFFICE

FIGURE 4. 4: ARE PROBLEMS WHICH HINDER THE SERVICE QUALITY OF WOLKITE POST OFFICE?



SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

The above figure 4 shows the response of customer on the factors that hinder the service quality of Wolkite post office. Then, from the total customers, 29customers (53%) answer yes. And the remaining 26customers (47%) answers no. based on this data the post office has different problems which hinder its service.

On the above figure respondents who responses yes are put the problems which hinder the service quality of the post office. Problems which includes workers of the post office are not effectively handle customers, the post office cannot develop research to solve the problem, in some times workers are not arrive on time on work place, the messages are not effectively get on time and the post office cannot use effective and efficient technology in different branches.

Finally the respondents put their suggestion to solve the problems of the post office including the manager of the post office should effectively manage the employees of the post office, develop research on the overall work and activity of the post office, collect their own feedback from customer, use effective and efficient technology on the post office and give messages and letters for customer on time.

TABLE 11: GENERALLY HOW DO YOU CAN RATE THE SERVICE QUALITY PRACTICES OF THE POST OFFICE?

	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How do you can rate the service quality practices of the post office	Very high	6	11
	High	11	20
	Medium	18	33
	Low	16	29
	Very low	4	7
	Total	55	100

SOURCE: QUETIONARIS, 2020

Table 11 shows the rate of service quality practice of Wolkite postal service. As the graph indicates that the customer rates the postal service as 11% very high, 20%high, 33% medium, 29% low and 7% very low. Based on the above graph the customer is not fully satisfied by the quality service of the postal office, so the post office can rearrange its service to satisfy its customers.

4.6 SUGGESTIONS OF RESPONDENTS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICE QUALITY OF THE POST OFFICE

As the customer of Wolkite postal service, the respondents suggest the post office to improve its service quality as follow:

- The manager of the post should manage his employee effectively.
- Develop research on the service quality of the post office.
- The post office must gather information from his customer on its current work practice.
- The employees of the post office must give effective service for customer.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDING

Among the distributed questionnaire, all were recollected and it resulted in a response rate of 100%. From the total sampled customer 33 (60%) are males, and 22 (40%) are females. Based on educational qualification from grade 10-12 completed have covers 13% customer, certificate 11%, and diploma 20%, B.A degree 40% and above B.A degree covers 16% customers. And also most customers have 0-10year (70%) attachment with the postal office.

Among the 30 sampled respondents, 22 (40%) of them replied that they are their own private box which they receive their mail on different time and the remaining 33 (60%) has not their own private p.o.box. from the respondents who has their own private p.o.box 40% of respondents check their p.o.box every week and 60% of the respondent check their private p.o.box in every month.

From the total 55 sampled customers 27% respondents are get their mail on time, 33% of customers are not get their mail on time and 40% of the customers are get their mail some times on time and on other time they cannot get their mail on time. From those 44% (24) of Customers who do not receive their mail on time, 56% (31 customers) do not receive their letter on time. And all the sampled customers are 100% do not receive mails that are not belonging to them

33% of respondents rated the way employees handle the issues that are related with the customers as below average. Regarding loss of message, 15 (26.7%) of them replied yes, and 40 (73%) replied no answer

Responsiveness is one of the major service packages that customers expect from the organization providing service. Thus the customers rated that is very high 13%, high 20%, medium 30%, low 26% and very low 11%. Regarding the assurance of service provided at the Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch, 16% shares very high, high 27%, medium 20%, low 33% and very low covers 4%. On the level of empathy, 20% of customers responded very high, 9% of

respondents said that it is high, 31% of them said it is medium and 31% and 9% of respondents said that it is low and very low.

The last dimension of customers rate in this study is tangibles of Ethiopian postal service. Accordingly, 11%, 29%, and 33% of respondents rated it as very high, high and medium. Where as the remaining 20% and 7% rated as low and very low respectively.

From the total sampled customers those who rates the service quality practices, 11% of the customer rates very high, 20% of customer rates high, 33% rates as a medium, 29% rates as low and 7% of the customers rates as very low. And finally respondents can give their suggestion for the problems that hinder the service quality of the post office.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The central objective of this paper was to assess the service quality in mail handling Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch. The following conclusions were given based on the data collected and analyzed depending on the objectives.

Overall, majority of customers do not have private box in which they can receive their message. The Ethiopian postal service customers in Wolkite post office check their mail box monthly and weekly than daily. Customers of postal office are not satisfied by the service that they are receiving currently from Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite and additionally, customers have doubt on the timely availability of their messages through time.

The data collected from the respondents clearly speaks that the customers do not have received the message that does not belong to their affair. Thus all of the respondents (100%) replied that they received only messages that are directed to them.

The Wolkite post office employees are not much caring for customers when interacting in the office. Some respondents have incurring loss of their message before they receive it. Reliability of service at the Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch is found to be below the average depending on the response of the sample respondents. Further the responsiveness of the postal office to its customers is found to be below the average.

Overall, the service quality of the Ethiopian postal service is not on the dimension that is applauded by the customers. This can be approved by looking into various dimension of the service that the respondents were asked and the result was almost below the average depending on the five scale of very high, high, medium, low and very low. In which average is represented by medium.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In the face of heightening competition and customer sophistication, the emphasis on quality service delivery as an important driving force to organizational excellence. The service industry (both in the public and private organizations) plays an important role in the economy of many countries. In today's global competitive environment delivering quality service is considered as an essential strategy for success and survival. Thus Ethiopian postal service in Wolkite branch is expected to take the following action;

- ❖ Wolkite postal service needs to design the service system that accelerates the current reliability of service and work in enhancing the service quality of its customers.
- ❖ It is recommended for the Wolkite postal service to improve the responsiveness (prompt service to customers and willingness to help customers) to its customers through various mechanisms that can enhance their rate such as show you care, refunds, how to guides, product care tips, product satisfactions feedback, complementary product recommendation.
- ❖ Each and every employee in the organization from the top management to the technical core are required to assign due weightage to the areas of dissatisfaction and introduce fundamental changes in their existing practices for meeting the postal service needs of the customer.
- ❖ Just like world service giants in different sectors, Wolkite postal service also better to make every effort for Total Customer Satisfaction by expecting the clear attitudinal changes among the existing customers.

- ❖ Wolkite postal service have to once again rededicate itself and review its existing plans, policies, procedures, programs, strategies, and even budgets for offering confident and market expected services to win the hearts of its customer.
- ❖ Since customer's tests and preferences keep on changing, there is need for Wolkite postal service to study the market to understand what the customers want and change with the changing times. It has to offer services that are viable and that attract customer.
- ❖ The managers of the post office can manage his employee effectively and listen and solve the problems of the customer.
- ❖ Wolkite post office should prepare rewards for the employees who can give effective service for customers and for those who work to eliminate the problem of the customers.
- ❖ The post office must functioned the dimensions of service quality effectively and efficiently to give a quality service for customers and it gives proper quality service training practices for its staff members.
- ❖ To improve its services quality Wolkite post office create relationship with other service giver organization and develop modernize technology to give quick service for its customers.
- ❖ The post office must prepare research about the overall service quality to avoided the problems that hinder its service quality.

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APPENDEX

WOLKITE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

Dear respondent, this questionnaire is prepared by 3rd year Management student for the partial fulfillment of BA Degree in Management program from Wolkite University. The title of the study is Assessment on Service Quality in mail handling Ethiopian postal service in case of Wolkite Postal Service

I insure you that the response in this questionnaire will be used for the research purpose generally.

Thank you in advance for your time and genuine response.

Instruction:-

1. Do not write your name
2. Please write clear and short answer in the blank spaces
3. For the multiple choice questions answer using a tick x

Part one General Information

1. Gender A) Male B) Female

2. Age

A) below 19 C) 30 - 39 E) above 50

B) 20 - 29 D) 40 - 49

3. Educational qualification

- A) Below 10th grade E) B.A degree
- B) 10th -12th Grade completed F) Above B.A
- C) Certificate G) If other please specify _____
- D) College Diploma

4. How long have you been a customer?

- A) 5 years and below C) 11 - 15 years
- B) 6 - 10 years D) Over 16 years

Part two questionnaire related to the study

Section A

NO	Item	yes	No	I do not know
1	Do you have private post box?			
2	Have you received you letter, parcel or Electronic mail service (EMS) on time?			
3	Have you ever got any mail which does not belong to you in your box?			
4	Has my letter, parcel of EMS got lost sent to you?			
5	Are problems that hinder the service quality Wolkite post office?			

No	Item	Every day	Every week	Every month
1	If you response yes for question No.1 how often do you check your post Box?			

No	Item	Letter	Parcel	EMS
1	If not yes for question No.2 which one?			

No	Item	The mail is lost/robed	The mail is dissent	The mail is damaged	Workers are not found on working time
1	If you answer yes for question No.4 please identify it?				

1 If your response yes for No.3 please give your solution to solve the problem?

2. What did the post office do for you to solve your problem mentioned in No.4?

3. If you say yes for question No.5 mentioned the problems and list of your solution?

Section B

N0	Item	Very high	High	Medium	low	Very low
1	How do you rate the postal service employees handling of customers?					
2	How do you rate the reliability of service at Wolkite post office?					
3	How do you rate the assurance of service at Wolkite post office?					
4	How do you rate the empathy of service at Wolkite post office?					
5	How do you rate the tangibles of Wolkite post office?					
6	How do you rate the service quality practice of Wolkite post office?					

Section C open ended questionnaires'

1. As a customer of postal service, what do you suggest to improve the quality of the service?

“Thanks for your Response”