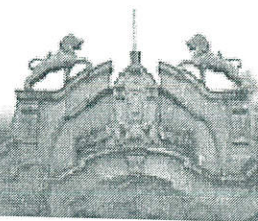


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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION
(Masters Program)

MEASURING STUDENTS' SATISFACTION
(THE CASE OF POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION STUDENTS AT
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF MASTERS OF ARTS
DEGREE IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT EDUCATUION

BY:

DAWIT MELAK

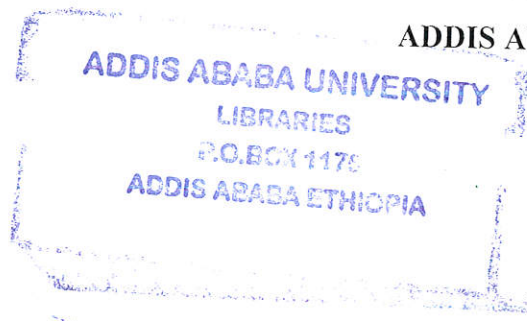
ADVISOR:

GIRMA ZEWDIE (Asso. Professor)



March 2010

ADDIS ABABA



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APPROVED By Board of Examiners

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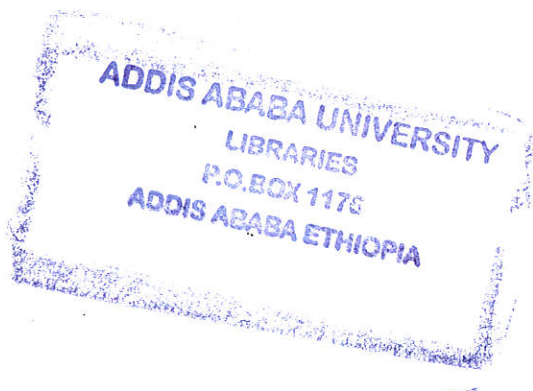
B. S. Bose
External Examiner **K. SRININASA BOSE.**

Declaration

I, Dawit Melak, declare that this study entitled “*Measuring Students’ Satisfaction: the case of Post Graduate Education students at Addis Ababa University*” is my effort and study. I have carried it out independently except for the guidance and suggestions of the research supervisor. This study has not been submitted for any degree / diploma in this or any other university. It is offered here in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in Marketing Management Education.



Dawit Melak



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Abstract

This study applies service quality and customer satisfaction theory to the field of education and particularly to postgraduate studies. The aim of the research presented here is to measure students' satisfaction at the Addis Ababa University across wide ranging educational experiences. A sample of 126 students was considered and an approach adopted from student satisfaction inventory by Noel-Levitz and graduate students satisfaction survey in European University was used in order to reach this aim, and as the main approach in this thesis. The necessary data was gathered from self-administered questionnaire and interview made with the concerned party. Descriptive method research was employed. The findings indicate that there is a high level of dissatisfaction among students and they are particularly unappreciative of the infrastructural requirements and helpfulness of staff in various sections of the university. Areas of satisfaction are also highlighted. There is evidence to confirm that some issues raised in the focus group discussion of the strategic planning committee are being addressed. Various strengths and weaknesses are identified by students. Whilst the comprehensive range of data produced is very informative students indicate that the study should be shorter conducted continuously in future.

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter is designed to introduce the study area—measuring the Customers' Experience: A Survey of Graduate Students' Satisfaction. Further, research problem and objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study are addressed. Finally, the conceptual framework, operational definitions of terms, and the organization (generic outline) of the study are provided.

1.1. Background

Studies reveal that a student's positive perceptions of academic programs and personal affiliations with faculty, staff, and students contribute to a feeling of "student-centeredness" (Elliott, 2003). This phenomenon makes students feel connected to and welcomed by their institution, making them more likely to stay at institutions and feel satisfied with their overall experience.

The university's official web site reads that Addis Ababa University (AAU) is one of the largest higher learning institutions in Africa that was established at the end of the 1940s. Formerly known as Haile Selassie I University, AAU was established by Ministry of Education in 1949 as a Trinity College with 71 students and 9 academic staff. It was granted a charter in July 1950 as an autonomous higher learning institution under a different name of the University College of Addis Ababa (UCAA). This makes AAU one of the oldest, if not the oldest, modern African university.

According to the "Teaching and Learning in Graduate programs at AAU—Report on the current (AS-IS) Situation)", Graduate education in Ethiopia, as in many parts of Africa, is a recent phenomenon. At AAU graduate study was launched in 1978 with eight MSc programs, while PhD training started in 1987. One major factor that prompted the University to launch graduate study programs was the need to provide qualified staff for the higher education sector. The other main reason was to stimulate research that could

contribute to the development of the nation. Currently, AAU is expanding its graduate programs and research with the vision of becoming a leading university renowned nationally and internationally in graduate studies and research. Accordingly, its main mission is to offer high quality graduate programs in several key disciplines and to conduct research in order to enhance the intellectual, cultural and economic development of the nation.

AAU's mission and vision to promote excellence in the production, growth and dissemination of advanced scientific knowledge through teaching and research is aligned with the fulfillment of the national goals of development and the effort to enhance Ethiopia's overall capacity of higher education. The current rapid expansion of graduate study programs in various fields is in response to the national goal of producing 10,000 MA and 2,000 PhD graduates in five years time, i.e. 2000-2005 EC. (Teaching and Learning in Graduate programs at AAU—Report on the current (AS-IS) Situation)

Objectives of the University

According to the information secured from the university's web site, following are stated objectives of the University.

- To search for, cultivate, preserve, and transmit knowledge
- To provide education that fully develops the personality and strengthens the respect for human dignity, by promoting mutual respect, understanding, friendship, and tolerance free from ethnic, nationality, sex, religious, and other prejudices
- To inculcate the dignity of work and dedication for the well being of the society with the view to enhancing the socioeconomic development of the Ethiopian people
- To provide the country with competent men and women, imbued with a sense of social purpose and trained in sciences, technology, the arts, and various other professionals
- To conduct research and studies, in an objective and dispassionate way and free from any bias, on different fields and disseminate fruitful results thereof.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

For many organizations in the public sector customer satisfaction is the measure of success. Various organizations are investing heavily in improving performance in areas that make a strong contribution to customer satisfaction, such as service quality and customer services.

Continuous improvement is essential for any higher education institution that wants to be able to attract students in the future. All improvements of study programs, teaching and support services, etc; must of course be based on the voice of the customer, which in this case are the students. Measuring the students' perception of the “product” they receive, their satisfaction is thus the cornerstone of every improvement effort. Successful institutions tend to share three basic attributes: they focus on the needs of their students, they continually improve the quality of the educational experience, and they use student satisfaction assessment results to shape their future directions.

But how do we know if organizations are succeeding in satisfying, let alone delighting, their customers? The truth of the matter is that many organizations do not including Addis Ababa University (AAU here after). It is a widely accepted adage in the quality world that “if you can’t measure it you cannot manage it”. This principle applies equally to customer satisfaction as it does to thousands of components coming off a production line.

In deed, many companies and organizations still do not measure customer at all—and many who claim to be measuring it do so in an inadequate way (Hill N. and Alexander J 2003). Thus, there seems to be a serious void in the research on graduate education since the degree of satisfaction experienced by the graduate student may be important not only for his level of performance but also for his remaining in graduate school and attaining his degree objective To the best of the researcher’s knowledge AAU is one of these organizations. What is often done in relation to measuring customer (students) satisfaction at AAU is students fill questionnaires about their respective instructors’ performance.

Student evaluation of teaching quality in higher education is a well-recognized practice and research on the subject has been conducted for over seventy years (O'Neil, 1997). The merits of student evaluation have also been well debated, with some academics arguing that students are not suitably qualified to judge quality of teaching (Wallace J, 1999) and others offering strong support for the use of student evaluation for quality assurance purposes (Oldfield and Baron, 2000; Murray, 1997).

Where students' feedback is used as a mechanism for quality assurance, there is also support for student evaluation of entire courses or programmes of study and over all educational experience students gained at institutions in order to facilitate a more comprehensive assessment (Wilson K., et al., 1997). And students' level of satisfaction should not be evaluated only based on their feedbacks as to their respective course instructors. The attributes they think are worth considering (important) should also be dealt with in relation to their level of satisfaction so as to identify areas of strength and those that really need improvement and then enable the university to fine tune aspects of policies, procedures and practices, and thereby enhance students' university experience. In order to be successful (attain its mission and vision) it is vital that AAU, like any other business, address issues of customer (student) satisfaction.

Related researches conducted so far at the postgraduate level were on specific issues such as supervision, skills development, teaching quality factors on course and instructor satisfaction, and quality and standing of the MBA program. None of these studies, however, have attempted a gap analysis of the students' expectations of what the university possesses and the level of satisfaction with such expected attributes.

Over the past few years, higher education institutions in Ethiopia have experienced dramatic changes, both in their funding and student numbers. With the advent of full fees for students, there is competitive pressure to provide value and quality education. Higher education institutions are increasingly devoting considerable time and resources to meet the expectations and needs of students. The challenge for management in these institutions is now not only to better meet student needs and wants *per se*, but also to monitor the changes in student needs over time. The fact seems to be ignored at AAU.

Thus, though, various problems can be identified, the study will attempt to address the following major issues / basic research questions.

1. What attributes of overall educational experience are considered most important by graduate students?
2. How are graduates satisfied with each attribute and overall educational experiences?
3. What areas of educational experience are students most satisfied and dissatisfied with?
4. How large the satisfaction gaps are for the most important attributes?
5. How effective is the University in handling students' complaints?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

In general, the objective of the thesis writing was to evaluate or measure AAU's post-graduate students' level of satisfaction. Specifically, the thesis writing was designed to address the following concerns:

1. To identify the importance of attributes of educational experiences at Addis Ababa University.
2. To determine extent to which graduate students on the targeted campuses of the university are satisfied, dissatisfied, or delighted.
3. To identify the areas of educational experiences that contributed to the most satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
4. To investigate the gaps between the most important attributes and students level of satisfaction with them.
5. To evaluate the University's level of commitment and understanding to win customers and keep them for long

1.4. Significance of the Study

It is believed that, when managers know what kind of problems the organizations they run / lead have and if the symptoms and real cause of such problems are revealed as a result of a thorough research, they can deal with the problems better. This may help them to carry out their obligations more efficiently.

The study also contributes to initiate further in-depth research on the problem under study at a large scale—University wide. The thesis research is expected to be of great importance and help for decision makers in framing the university's policies and procedures pertaining to the educational services and the services' distribution system. Specifically, following form part of the study's significance:

1. It identifies problem areas and strengths in order to support marketing programs for the university. Student survey results aid in strategic planning and institutional goal setting, providing important direction for operational objectives and program planning. Institutions that use survey data to guide decision making develop an in-depth understanding of students as critical consumers and meet their needs more effectively. It gives the institution an opportunity to take the pulse of the student body to determine what matters to students and how satisfied they are.
2. It is also helpful in influencing budget decisions, enhancing total quality managements, and providing feedback to the faculty.
3. The findings of the thesis research will initiate other interested researchers to undertake a better and detailed study in the area and would help produce benchmarking, setting standards against which to compare future data collected.
4. It provides additional information to the existing literature on measuring student customer satisfaction.
5. It will help the student researcher to gain practical research experience and better future career opportunity.
6. Other universities may benefit from the thesis by conducting a similar kind of research in their own respective cases.

1.5. Scope of the Study

- This thesis writing is delimited to measuring the satisfaction level of AAU's post-graduate students at Arat killo (Science Faculty) and Sidist Killo (main campus). Even though additional factors (constructs) can affect students' satisfaction, only those which were depicted and thought to have paramount relationship with students' level of satisfaction as described in chapter one as part of the

conceptual framework were considered. These include, but not limited to, the following:

- As the total number of post-graduate students who are currently (in 2010) about to graduate is large and diversified in terms of fields of study and requirements for effective running of the programs, the researcher was expected to consider relatively large number of sample proportional to the total population. Unfortunately, from the preliminary survey, the researcher learned that many students were very much unwilling to fill the questionnaire meant for the purpose, even some of the students who were willing did not responsibly returned the questionnaires they took, and students in some departments have already left the University for conducting their own research and thus were totally inaccessible to this study's researcher. Thus, the researcher was forced to consider those who are accessible for the purpose.
- The amount of money for conducting such a vast University wide research is obviously large for it requires greater number of concerned individuals as contributors in terms of preparing the questionnaire items pertinent to each category of graduate students at the University, arranging ways for ease of gathering the required data (like informing the instructors who will be kindly requested to give permission for researcher's entrance to distribute the pertinent questionnaire during class time, advisors cooperation in terms of getting their advisees filled the questionnaires and so on), collecting data from graduates of various campuses, and the incentive that might be made to the students so that they could extend their cooperation; the study was delimited to masters education students.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

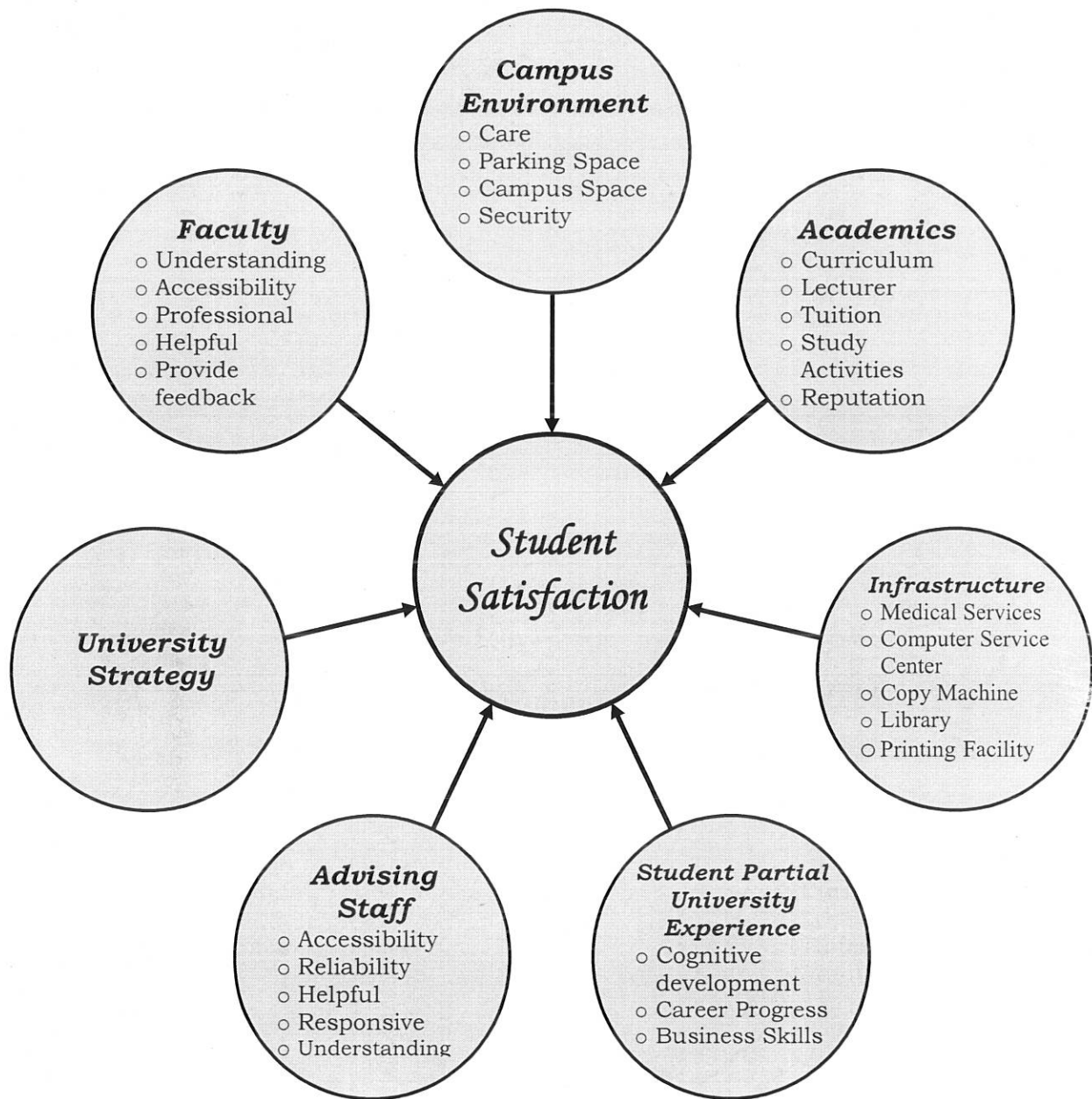
- The researcher tried to incorporate as many dimensions as possible that he believed can serve measure students' level of satisfaction with their educational experience at the University. However, he is afraid that some graduates might have been tired and carelessly filled some part of the questionnaires.

- The other limitation of this thesis writing was lack or inadequacy of related literatures in the area considered—graduates satisfaction—which constrained the researcher's ability to look at the issue from different perspectives and make the analysis accordingly.
- The last limitation of the study is that since the provision quality of service that lead to satisfaction can partly be enhanced by service takers' (students) contribution, incorporating the views of/the perceptions the University's staff have of students would have strengthened the quality of the research.

1.7. The Conceptual Framework of the Study

Conceptual frameworks show the relationships among various attributes. Thus, the appropriate management of the determinants of satisfaction is vital to the strategic decisions of the University. The following proposed framework is areas / issues that relate to student satisfaction:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Adapted by the researcher from Keavency and Young (1986) part of student satisfaction and retention model (SSRM)

1.8. Operational Definitions of Terms and Concepts

The following terms were used as they are defined here under for the purposes of the study:

- ***Customer satisfaction measurement***—is a systematic process for collecting customer data (e.g. surveys, audits, etc.), analyzing these data to make it into actionable information, driving the results throughout an organization, and implementing satisfaction improvement plan.
- ***Student satisfaction*** - When student expectations are met or exceeded by an institution.(Noel-Levitz, 2006)
- ***Satisfaction inventory*** - A survey measuring student satisfaction and priorities showing how satisfied students are as well as what issues are important to them. (Noel-Levitz, 2006)
- **Noel-Levitz** is a nationally (in USA) and internationally recognized consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning for enrollment and student success in higher education.
- ***“Staff”*** shall mean the academic and/or administrative staff of the University;
- ***University”*** / Institution shall mean Addis Ababa University;
- ***Attribute*** means a characteristic that serves as an evaluative criterion
- ***Customer***—education post-graduate student at AAU.
- ***Customer satisfaction*** — an emotion resulting from a customer judgment based on expectations, cognitive processes, emotions and a specific purchase experience.
- ***Expectation*** refers to what perception students have of the University before they join. It is the same as importance.
- ***Total student experience*** refers to the whole range of experience or put differently all aspects of the engagement (which would include issues such as the facilities available within the institution, relationships with the academic staff and others, and attitudes towards the advisements, perception towards the University as a whole).

1.9. Organization of the Study

This thesis writing is organized in such a way that the first chapter which deal with background, problem statement, conceptual framework, and other pertinent issues, followed by chapter two which reviews the related literatures, then by chapter three which is concerned with methodological part of the thesis. Chapter four presents the data collected through the instrument, analysis, and interpretation part of the thesis. Finally, the last chapter—chapter five—concludes the thesis and provides feasible recommendations based on the findings showed in chapter four.

2005

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter is devoted to review of literatures that have relevance to the study so as to have an insight into the research topic and to briefly expose the readers to some of the major areas of the subject matter under consideration. The review is organized under the following headings: introduction, concept of customer satisfaction, the university customers, university student satisfaction, student satisfaction and institutional effectiveness, measuring student satisfaction, customer satisfaction and service quality in education, and finally consequences of student dis/satisfaction.

2.1. Introduction

The importance of higher education has increased worldwide and societies have become more dependent upon professionals (Metzger, 1987). In this regard, higher education plays a crucial role in supporting macroeconomic growth, and consequently affects the regions' economy (Kane, 2005). The overall purpose of university education is to educate and prepare young people for later realization in the labor market. The common perception is that the quality of education has an impact on the opportunities to find highly desirable job placements.

The environment that higher educational institutions have operated in has changed dramatically over the last several years. Tuition-free government/public colleges and universities are rapidly raising tuition charges as the federal student aid has dropped significantly.

At this point, it might serve us well to briefly dwell upon the concept of 'satisfaction' per se and what satisfaction might mean within an educational context. There have been numerous attempts by researchers in the field of industrial psychology to provide some broad definition of the concept of 'satisfaction'. Most of these definitions view satisfaction as a final state within a psychological process (Giese & Cote 1999); that is, a summative response to the experience of acquiring and/or consuming goods and services.

In the context of post-secondary education, student satisfaction with educational services is a psychological state achieved through the evaluation of the range of the educational services offered by an educational provider.

Customer satisfaction is the most common of all marketing surveys and is part of the “big three” research studies in marketing that include market segmentation and concept testing. Measuring satisfaction and building a satisfaction survey requires at least a basic knowledge of the satisfaction measurement literature, combined with your own customer satisfaction experiences. This part of the study provides an introduction to the theoretical underpinnings of satisfaction research by first defining the concept of customer satisfaction and how satisfaction is used in educational sector.

Despite a vast literature in customer satisfaction, little has been said on the satisfaction of higher education institutions’ customers i.e. the students (Elliot, 2003). Higher educational institutions are increasingly recognizing that they are in the service industry. As service organization, higher educational institutions are dealing with a same situation which places greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and needs of their customers. The acknowledgement of the students’ experience of an institution is regarded as an essential perspective to adopt in students satisfaction survey. According to (Douglas & Douglas, 2006) students’ opinion in the forms of satisfaction feedback is recognized in educational institution worldwide.

Researchers in higher education have assessed student satisfaction in three different justifications. First, most researchers have measured solely the levels of student satisfaction in order to identify the most and the least satisfaction with university programs and services for accountability reporting and self-improvement purposes. Secondly, some researchers have examined student satisfaction to see if satisfaction ratings of college programs and services associate with the satisfaction of the overall college experience. Lastly, few researchers have investigated student satisfaction items related to the occurrence of the educational events such as student retention and attrition. The measurement of student satisfaction can be useful to higher educational institutions, to help them pinpoint their strengths and identify areas for improvement. Satisfaction

ratings go beyond teaching assessments, which have a narrow focus, to include broader aspects of the student learning experience. To grasp the complexity of that learning experience, it is not enough to know the degree to which students are satisfied, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to student satisfaction.

Successful institutions share three basic attributes: they focus on the needs of their students; they continually improve the quality of the educational experience, and they use student satisfaction data to shape their future directions (Lana, 2000). Seemingly, in view of this AAU is currently expanding its graduate programs and research with the vision of becoming a leading university renowned nationally and internationally in graduate studies and research. Accordingly, its main mission is to offer high quality graduate programs in several key disciplines and to conduct research in order to enhance the intellectual, cultural and economic development of the nation (Teaching and learning in graduate programs at AAU—report on the current (AS-IS) situation).

2.2. The Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Early concepts of customer satisfaction research have typically defined satisfaction as a post choice evaluative judgment concerning a specific purchase decision (Churchill and Sauprenant 1992; Oliver 1980). Most researchers agree that satisfaction is an attitude or evaluation that is formed by the customer comparing their pre-purchase expectations of what they would receive from the product to their subjective perceptions of the performance they actually did receive (Oliver, 1980). Two key words there are “perception,” because that is all we can really measure, and “expectation.” If you are measuring satisfaction outside of the context of expectation, or level of importance, you run the risk of working in areas that won’t have any retention pay-off. Remember that perception is reality.

Customer expectation can be defined as customer’s pretrial beliefs about a product (Mckinney et al., 2002). Expectations are viewed as predictions made by consumers about what is likely to happen during impending transaction or exchange. Perceived performance is defined as customer’s perception of how product performance fulfills their needs, wants and desire (Cadotte et al.1987). Perceived quality is the consumer’s

judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority. Disconfirmation is defined as consumer subjective judgments resulting from comparing their expectations and their perceptions of performance received (Mckinney et al.2002, Spreng et al.1996)

Satisfaction surveys are developed to provide an understanding of customers' expectations and satisfaction. Satisfaction surveys typically require multiple questions that address different dimensions of the satisfaction concept. Satisfaction measurement includes measures of overall satisfaction, satisfaction with individual product and service attributes, and satisfaction with the benefits of purchase. Satisfaction measurement is like peeling away layers of an onion-each layer reveals yet another deeper layer, closer to the core (Smith et al, 1990).

2.3. University Customers

Virtually all institutions of higher education have multiple customer segments—and unlike a manufacturer with multiple product lines, the customer segments in higher education have diverse relationships with the institution. The following are the customer segments:

- **Students**—Harvey L. (1996) observed some years ago that, because 'higher education is first and foremost about the enhancement and empowerment of students as participants in a process of learning,' students should be recognized as the key stakeholder in higher education. They are dynamic and can be considered as consumers and product both looking from different angles. Their satisfaction is necessary when looked from marketing eyes in the era of competition.

This category of University customers is may be composed of undergraduate and graduate students. The undergraduates need good basic education programs, good faculty, opportunity for jobs upon graduation, student housing with all the contemporary amenities, fitness centers, campus saloons, etc. on the other hand graduate students need an institution with a graduate reputation, faculty of note, research facilities, research grants, fellowships, etc.

- **Faculty** – competition for faculty means they are customers of the institution, too. Faculty need office space, competitive salary, opportunities for research, stimulating community environment, affordable housing, etc.

- **Staff** – staffs have unique needs as well: affordable housing, a benefits package, flexibility of work hours/conditions, competitive pay, paid parking, etc.
- **Alumni** – alumni constitute an important customer segment for all institutions of higher education because alumni are sources for future students, goodwill, financial contributions and legacies, and the like. But alumni have customer needs, too. Reliable contact, opportunities to return to the campus, networking, and the like.
- **The local community** – another customer segment that often gets lost in the shuffle is the local community, town or village. Often large institutions can appear to run roughshod over small jurisdictions, and create ill will-usually unknowingly and certainly unintentionally. But the local community is a customer of the institution that needs nurturing because it can control aspects of the institution's destiny including such things as building permits, zoning, and the like. Local community needs can range from access to facilities, to communication about events, access to students for babysitting, tutors, interns, etc.

The *European Foundation for Quality Management* [EFQM] 1995, distinguished the following customer (student) groups in university education: i) the corporate world of potential employers; ii) families, who contribute financial resources and demand security and information on the student's progress; iii) prospective students, who need information on which to base their choice; iv) alumni, who may require additional training and updating of their knowledge; and v) society as a whole, which needs a competent labor force and free, educated citizens.

For each of these publics, or customer segments, the institution needs to keep abreast of its level of satisfaction with the institution's performance. Over time services and benefits to the various segments may change in response to trends in satisfaction. As a result, overall satisfaction scores over years should generally trended upward, and the institution benefits from high student retention, high quality graduate students, and stable faculty and staff.

Hill (1995 in Jurkowitsch et al) suggests that the primary customers of the universities are the students and so Higher Education “is increasingly recognizing that it is a service industry and is placing greater emphasis on meeting the expectations and needs of students” (Elliott & Shin, 2002, in Jurkowitsch et al). Furthermore, other researchers argue that the customers for the services of a higher education institution fall into five groups: the students, the employees, the employers, the government and the public sector, and the industry and wider community (Kanji and Tambi, 1999,). The primary customers are the students (Hill, 1995; Wallace, 1999). Without students to teach to, there is no business for higher education institutions, no research to conduct or service to provide. Without perceived value there is no reason for students to choose our institution over an increasingly large number of similar institutions. To raise that value, students' perceived quality and satisfaction should be measured and managed

This research considers the graduate students as target market of the University. Thus, the research analysis and results only applies to this group of the public / stakeholders.

2.4. Student Satisfaction in the Context of Higher Education Institution

There are many difficulties involved in managing a customer's satisfaction, and these are particularly complicated in the education sector. Because education is a service, it is often challenging to increase both customer satisfaction and productivity concurrently (Anderson *et al.* 1997). One of the contributors to this fact is that customer satisfaction is more dependent on customization, yet increased productivity often requires more standardization. In an education-related context, this can best be described by understanding that students generally prefer smaller classes where they can contribute more to course discussion and receive personal attention from the professor, but this is significantly more costly and less efficient than educating students in a large-classroom setting.

Another element that contributes to the complexity of this understanding is a customer's perception of quality, which has been found to have a direct relationship with the individual's level of satisfaction (Cronin *et al.* 1992). A customer's satisfaction with a

service is often an essential method used to evaluate its quality. Although it is typically not the case in a higher education setting that students' satisfaction would be the only method for judging an institution's quality, this measure can greatly impact external perceptions of a university who are interested in statistics like student retention (Athiyaman, 1997). Other important stakeholders in this process who are involved in gauging its quality include the financial providers of the student's education, employers, current professionals in the field of study, and the community at large (Lagrosen *et al.* 2004). Although these parties' opinions will not be sought during this study, it is the opinion of the researcher that they are still important to mention due to the potential impact that they could have on the students' satisfaction with the university experience.

In the case of higher educational services, far fewer studies on customer's satisfaction have been conducted (Hill, F.M., 1995). According to (Navarro et al. 2005), numerous attempts have been made by researchers to define the concept of satisfaction in relation to services offered in higher education. They acknowledge that satisfaction is the final state of psychological process. Further more, they indicated that student's satisfaction is a short-term attitude that results from the evaluation of their experience with the education service received. It should be highlighted that most of the studies on this issue were carried out within the context of analyzing student's satisfaction for the main services or the core business offered by universities (Harvey L., 1996). However, Aldridge and Rowley (1998) pointed out that many higher educational institutions perform some evaluation on other expects of students experience beyond the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning.

Sirvanci (2004) classifies HEIs' services into two categories, namely academic program and facilities. His model depicts student's flow in higher education, from admission to graduation. In this context, he has postulated that, those services will give an impact on student's teaching and learning experience.

Based on the literature review of higher education institutions, this study holds the view that facilities are important resources to higher educational institutions in providing for their core business. The teaching and learning factor is not something that occurs solely

in the classroom but it integrates with the facilities. These two factors (teaching and learning, and facilities) are linked to each other and becoming ever more central to students' total experience and attitude towards a particular institution and this is termed as value chain. Therefore, in measuring students' satisfaction, these two categories of services are interrelated.

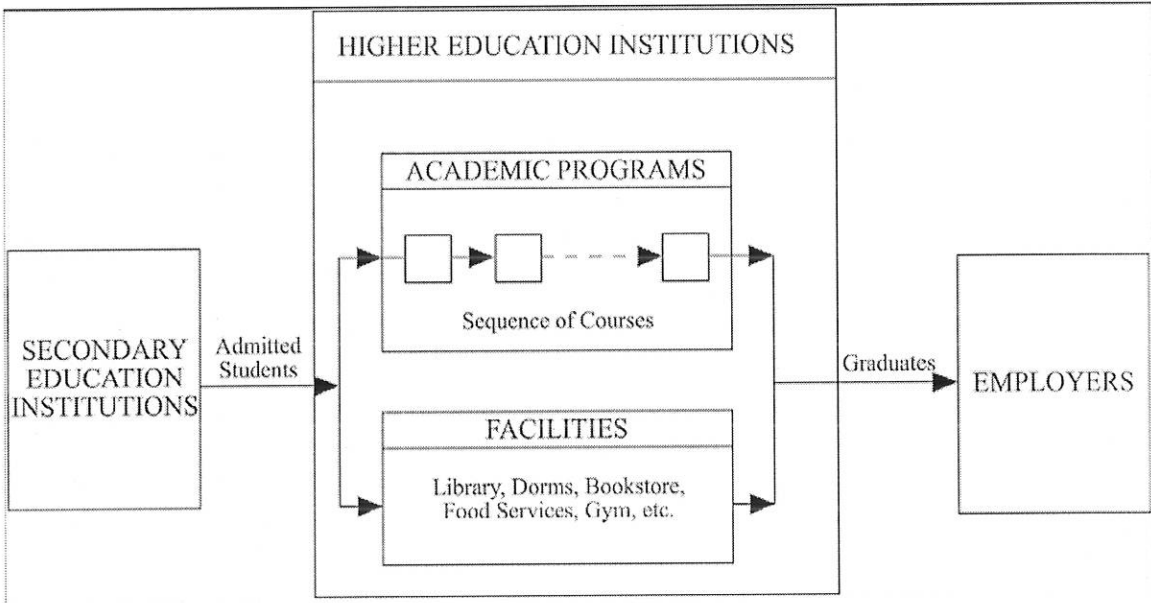


Figure 2: Student’s flow in higher education (Source: Sirvanci, 2004)

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how the services or physical tangible products a company offers to its target market match with what the customers (market) expected before experiencing the service of physical product. Put differently, customers' evaluation of service quality was a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between the customers' expectations of service and his/her perception of the service actually delivered. These expectations stem from word-of-mouth promotion about the service that a customer has heard, one's past experience, the promises made about the service by its advertisements and by its sales representatives, and other situational factors. Therefore in the context of educational services, students' satisfaction refers to how they (student customers) feel (their perceptions they have of) about the services the institution provides. It is all about fulfillment or gratification of the students with the University.

Universities have exhibited their commitment to student satisfaction through mission statements, goals/objectives, marketing strategies, and promotional themes. Athiyaman, A. (1997) argues that "virtually all company activities, programs, and policies should be evaluated in terms of their contribution to satisfying customers." Understanding the consequences of student satisfaction has been a concern of marketing researchers and practitioners for many years. The concern is derived from the generally accepted philosophy that for an organization to be successful it must satisfy customers.

Student satisfaction studies measure how effectively campuses deliver what students expect, need, and want. In this context, student satisfaction is defined as the student's fulfillment response. It is the individual overall subjective evaluation and experience of a product/service feature, the product/service itself and between what was received and what was expected from a specific service provider to date (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993; Anderson, Fornell & Rust, 1997; Oliver, 1999). So, expectations are defined "as beliefs about a product's attribute or performance at some time in the future" (Spreng, MacKenzie & Olshavsky, 1996). To grasp the complexity of the learning experience, it is important to understand the factors that contribute to student satisfaction. For many students, "the process of studying not only represents the acquisition of certain skills and theoretical knowledge. It is also related to personal growth and social development" (Wiers-Jenssen, Stensaker & Groggaard, 2002).

2.5. Student Satisfaction and Institutional Effectiveness

In higher educational institutions, students are said to be successful when they accomplish tasks (in the curriculum) expected of them. And this can be done through exams and research papers or in general terms when they show evidence of being learnt or brought about expected behavioral changes. But when do say that an institution giving educational services effective? It is when students are satisfied, if not delighted, with the University experiences. Students are the responses. The very reasons for and life-bloods of any organizations are customers and to educational institution—student-customers. Students are the measure of institutional performances.

Why does student satisfaction matter? B2B international (www.b2binternational.com) explained it this way. The higher education sector globally is more competitive than it has ever been. Educational establishments are under closer scrutiny than ever before, budgets are tight, and students are becoming increasingly discerning in the establishments and courses they choose. Against this backdrop, the requirement for universities and other educational organizations to understand the needs of their students is self-evident. Increased student satisfaction levels impact dramatically on an institution's ability to attract a greater number and higher caliber of students.

In higher education institutions, as well as in industry, customer focus should be the first priority (Golde C.M, and Dore, T.M, 2001). And satisfaction data can guide strategic planning efforts, often mandated for accreditation requirements, provide positive information for recruitment efforts, and allow for data-driven decision making. Institutions that use survey data to guide decision making develop an in-depth understanding of students as critical consumers and meet their needs more effectively (Bakker, A. I., & Krallman, D. 2005). Further more these scholars add that University administrators use satisfaction surveys to measure student perceptions of the campus experience in order to identify those areas where the institution is performing well. Conversely, Universities also use survey findings to target areas for improvement or to identify a need for new programs. Strengthening academic and co-curricular programs forms the basis for high-achieving institutions, contributing to institutional effectiveness and ensuring student success

Students come to educational institutions with expectations about what they want out of their years at Universities and Colleges. And, realistic or not, how well those expectations are met directly affects students' ratings of satisfaction with the institutions and their perceptions of the institutions' effectiveness. In fact, current research on the assessment of satisfaction and effectiveness emphasizes the importance of assessing students' expectations as a critical part of the assessment equation (Juillerat, 1995, in Stephanie Juillerat, and et al). Accordingly, a student's perception of an institution's effectiveness is directly related to whether or not students' expectations have been met. If Universities fail to include student perceptions in their assessments of quality, it may have, at least, an

incomplete picture of the institutions' effectiveness and, at most, an inaccurate picture of their levels of effectiveness.

If a student perceives the AAU as ineffective, any number of consequences may occur, including, but certainly not limited to, student attrition, poor public relations, a negative campus climate, reduced alumni funding, recruiting difficulties, and, ultimately, lost revenue. Waiting for these consequences to grace the University may result in an uphill battle to regain positive ratings of institutional effectiveness that the University would rather not fight. However, if AAU is not measuring student satisfaction as part of the process of assessing institutional effectiveness, it may find itself dealing with these end-of-the-line consequences and doing "too little too late." Assessing student expectations from the start may be a simple, but effective, part of the process for assessing institutional effectiveness,

The Student Satisfaction Survey enables the University to:

- Assess the level of satisfaction with, and importance of, various key issues
- Identify gaps in the provision of education services and resources
- Judge how successful the University has been in achieving specific policies
- Build a picture of students' expectations based on the whole student experience
- Highlight areas requiring further investigation

The benefit also goes to the students. Students who provide feedback will gain some of the benefits from modifications (related to any of the educational experiences) (Wossenu Y. 2008). On the other hand, listening is powerful for customers to read an impression that the organization cares about them and fosters to meet their needs/requirements.

2.6. Listening and Handling Customers' Complaints:

Contemporary managers recognize that they must stay in touch with and listen to their customers. Managers and employees must listen to customers who are frustrated with their service. But listening is the first step. Companies must also respond to customers'

complaints and concern. The successful organization is one that listens open-mindedly, acts appropriately, and uses customers' problems to improve service and win more customers (Tiosroud, D, 1993).

"Make it easy to complain" it is the point stressed by Loskot W (2000) in order to sustain the satisfaction of customers. This is due to the reason that people don't like to complain to organizations. "For various reasons, customers, even if they would like to complain, usually say nothing. Some of them don't want time and energy; others don't believe that it will make any difference. The rest might lack skills and assertiveness."

2.7. Measuring Student Satisfaction

A customer-oriented company would track its customer satisfaction level each period and set improvement goals. The customer is the best indicator of the company's future profit (success in achieving its objectives) (Amha G. 2004).

According to Bakker, A. I (2005), many higher education institutions perform some evaluation of the quality of education provided to students, as well as an assessment of the student satisfaction. However, different universities and even different academic departments within the same institution use different questions on student evaluation forms. Despite this variety of forms, the effort of grasping the nuances of student satisfaction can be divided into two loosely bound categories: (a) assessing teaching and learning; (b) assessing total student experience.

The focus of early work lay on the first category. More recently, there has been wider acknowledgement that the totality of student experience with the educational institution provides a more useful perspective to deal with student satisfaction in marketing terms.

A researcher has several choices in measuring student satisfaction. First, satisfaction can be measured as a post-purchase experience i.e. measured shortly after a service has been provided. Alternatively, satisfaction may be a cumulative measure over a whole period of delivery, say, a semester or a year. For the purpose of this research, the researcher adopted the latter (cumulative) conceptualization of student satisfaction. This is based on his acceptance of the fact that University education is a continuous service that may

involve a number of years for a typical university degree to be obtained. He assumes during these years the students engage in on-going evaluation hence the appropriateness of a cumulative conceptualization.

Student satisfaction evaluation is typically based on a cognitive process in which students compare their prior expectations of their educational experience to those actually experienced from attending a university. Students' satisfaction results when actual performance meets their expectation. If the actual (perceived performance, after consumption, exceeds the consumer's expectations, students will get delighted—become very satisfied. Likewise, if expectations exceed actual performance, dissatisfaction will result (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1993, Kotler 2003).

While most student satisfaction study focus on the perspective of customer, researchers is facing a problem of creating a standard definition for student satisfaction thus providing a need of customer satisfaction theory to be selected and modified so that it can explain the meaning of student satisfaction (Douglas & Douglas, 2006). Even though it is risky to view students as customer, but given the current atmosphere of higher education marketplace, there is a new moral prerogative that student have become “customer” and therefore can, as fee payers, reasonably demand that their views be heard and acted upon (William, 2002).

Even though the importance of student satisfaction has been widely recognized, most overall student satisfaction measurements are designed to simply assess the global or net satisfaction. Despite the apparent complexity of the student satisfaction construct, researchers have often used a single-item rating scale of four to seven points between the extremes of "very dissatisfied" and "very satisfied." The weakness of this approach is that it fails to recognize the quality attributes of an educational experience, as well as the student's varying degree of satisfaction with each attribute. Elliot K. M., & Shin, D. (2002) argue that many practitioners prefer a composite measure because it is more statistically reliable than any single measure.

Universities can continuously update information about changing perceptions and expectations of students. Weighted importance ratings should enable universities to set priorities. These priorities seemingly would help determine where to allocate limited resources effectively and how to make concerted efforts on the attributes considered important by students.

Recognizing the drawbacks associated with the traditional approach of measuring student satisfaction, which simply relies on a single-item measurement of overall satisfaction, an alternative approach is presented. The proposed approach (adapted from *Student Satisfaction Inventory* distributed by USA Group Noel-Levitz) utilizes multiple education attributes and students' varying degree of satisfaction with each attribute. Each student's overall satisfaction is determined by an average of the gap between a student's expectation of performance (importance rating) and actual experience (performance rating) for each educational attribute, and the relative importance of each educational attribute as perceived by the total student group.

2.8. Customer Satisfaction and Education Service Quality

Since quality has already been stated to play an important role in determining a student's level of satisfaction, it is now relevant to discuss a few of the various dimensions of quality. Some of the more widely used criteria include reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding the customer, and tangibles (Lagrosen et al. 2004). The student survey used in this research addresses many of these facets.

Research has found that quality can be measured in a variety of different ways. "Quality as exceptional" describes quality as exceeding high expectations. Quality measured in a manufacturing setting would often be described as "Quality as perfection or consistency" since these organizations place a high value on eliminating the number of defects in its operations. Quality that meets customer requirements would be described as "Quality as fitness for purpose." This definition is one of the more appropriate measures in a higher education setting as it helps to describe why students are coming to a university. Quality that is related to costs is "Quality as value for money." Finally, "Quality as

that is related to costs is "Quality as value for money." Finally, "Quality as transformation" describes processes that bring about a qualitative change which in a university setting might be skill or knowledge enhancement or increased confidence for students (Lagrosen et al. 2004).

Researchers have yet to come to a conclusion on the antecedents to service quality and satisfaction. A study carried out by Bitner (1990) on 145 tourists in an international airport suggested satisfaction as the antecedent to service quality (satisfaction → service quality). On the other hand, there are many other researchers who concluded that service quality is the antecedent to satisfaction (Cronin and Taylor, 1992). But in this research, the question of which one is the antecedent will not be studied. The researcher considers the educational service quality as being one of the factors that affect the students' level of satisfaction. Using service quality as the antecedent to satisfaction is more logical. This is because satisfaction is an important goal to be achieved by educational institutions and if they want to increase satisfaction, they can do it through service quality.

Although there is a general conformity on the distinctiveness of service quality and customer satisfaction from a conceptual point of view, the operationalisation of customer satisfaction is somewhat hazy. For instance, Cronin and Taylor (1992) defined and measured customer satisfaction as a one-item scale that asks for the customers' overall feeling towards an organization. By using a single item scale to measure customer satisfaction, Cronin and Taylor's approach fails to do justice to the richness of the construct, as it has failed to acknowledge that, like service quality, customer satisfaction is also likely to be multidimensional in nature. Bitner et al., (1990) used four items to measure the customers' overall satisfaction with the service provider. The authors introduced the concept of encounter satisfaction, and devised a nine-item scale to encounter.

From the growing body of literature on customer satisfaction, one can easily observe that there has been some research works on specific counters, known as transaction-specific/customer satisfaction. Researchers have also acknowledged the multidimensional nature of customer satisfaction and have come out with global measures

(capturing the satisfaction at multi-levels in the organization), that view overall satisfaction as a function of satisfaction with multiples experiences or encounters with the service providers. The present study takes a slightly different approach and view student satisfaction as a multi-dimensional construct, but the underlining factors/items of customer satisfaction are the same as ones by which service quality is measured. In other words, the current work argues that customer satisfaction should be operationalized along the same dimensions that constitute service quality and by the same items that span the different dimensions.

Satisfaction measurement is a difficult task to achieve as customer satisfaction is similar to attitude (Attiyaman, 1997). Quality too, according to Anderson, Fornell and Rust, 1997 is a form of attitude. In the case of higher education institutions, many broaden their scope of evaluation to include students' total experience rather than limiting it only to the assessment of the quality of teaching and learning, (Aldridge & Rowley, 1998) as the interaction between students and the institutions do not stop nor confined only to classroom environment.

Education quality, according to Cheng (2003) is the character of an input, process and output of the education system that satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their explicit and implicit expectation. Jagadeesh (2000) in his article on the quality in management education however, defined education quality from the perspective of knowledge base and skill set of the graduates.

Devinder and Datta (2003) argue that institutions which want to deliver quality programs and services to students must be concerned with every aspect of the students' experience on campus. In other words, education quality is not only limited to the lectures and notes received in class or advice and guidance given by lecturers during the consultation hours, but it also includes students' experience while interacting with the various non-academic personnel and components in the university, the physical infrastructure provided by the university etc. This is consistent with the findings of Jones and Suh (2000), which concluded that transaction specific satisfaction influences overall satisfaction, and that

both overall satisfaction and transaction specific satisfaction significantly influence repurchase intention.

There are many researchers who have defined service quality in different ways. For instance, Bitner, et al., 1994) define service quality as 'the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority / superiority of the organization and its services'. While other researchers (e.g. Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Taylor and Cronin, 1994) view service quality as a form of attitude representing a long-run overall evaluation, Parasuraman et al.,(1993) defined service quality as 'a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions'. This has appeared to be consistent with others' definition that service quality is a relativistic and cognitive discrepancy between experience-based norms and performances concerning service benefits.

Generally, there are two general conceptualizations of satisfaction, namely, transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction (Jones and Suh, 2000; Elliot, K. M., & Shin, D. (2002). Transaction-specific satisfaction is a customer's evaluation of his or her experience and reactions to a particular service encounter (Cronin and Taylor, 1992), and cumulative satisfaction refers to the customer's overall evaluation of the consumption experience to date (Anderson and Fornell, 1995).

2.9. Consequences of Students Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction

The consequences of not satisfying students can be severe. Dissatisfied consumers can decide to: -

- Discontinue education,
- Complain to the University or to a third party or
- Engage in negative word-of-mouth communication (Referrals: dissatisfied customers tell their family and friends about the product or service they were offered with unfavorably)

According to La Barbera and Mazursky (1983), Student satisfaction is important because “satisfaction influences repurchase intentions whereas dissatisfaction has been seen as a primary reason for student defection or discontinuation of purchase”.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This chapter presents detailed idea about how the research was conducted. It describes and justifies the research method that was applied to answer the basic research questions. At the end of this chapter the issue of reliability is discussed to follow the quality standards of the research.

3.1. The Research Method

As indicated in chapter one, this study is aimed at measuring graduates' level of satisfaction at Addis Ababa University. To this end, the following procedures of quantitative and qualitative research designs were employed to collect and analyze the data. Considering the nature of the study, its objectives, the time and budget available; the researcher employed descriptive method.

The objective of the research was accomplished through a several step process. Firstly, a set of coherent and relevant factors potentially influencing student satisfaction had to be established. Secondly, the factors had to be categorized into groups, each group reflecting certain satisfaction dimensions. Thirdly, the importance of the factors which have relationship with the educational experience, and the satisfaction experienced by the students in relation with those respective factors were investigated. Subsequently, both satisfaction dimensions as bundles of factors and the individual factors themselves were analyzed through measuring differences between the importance and the satisfaction obtained. Finally, dimensions of students' expectations and satisfactions having the greatest score were established.

The main part of the research was carried out by means of the survey method, employing the interview technique while the questionnaire was the instrument of data gathering. Students were asked to assess their academic experience through the importance of several factors and their satisfaction in relation to these factors.

3.2. Population and Sampling Unit

The population of the study is composed of graduate education students at AAU on its two campuses—Science Faculty and the Main campus. According to the data obtained from the registrar office of the University, the total population consisting of 407 students who are expected to graduate at the end of Sene in Ethiopian Calendar. Also, those graduates who are expected to defend their thesis work in the middle of the year 2002 E.C. are part of the population under study.

The sampling method used varies at two different levels. First the researcher used judgmental sampling in selecting the sampling unit. Since measuring students' satisfaction involves experience of customers and the more students stay experiencing at the University, they can evaluate performance as per their expectations; the researcher purposefully targeted only those who are expected to graduate at the end of this academic year (Sene 2002 E.C).

Secondly, the respondents (participants) were selected based on convenience sampling. This is because some department graduates have completed their taught courses and cannot be easily accessed while attending classes for they are out of reach to conduct their own thesis.

3.3. Types and Sources of Data Collected

Both primary and secondary data were consulted to secure sufficient data /information. Accordingly, first hand information was collected from the graduates and Graduate Study and Research Office. The primary data include those obtained through questionnaires distributed to sampled students and interview made with the office of Vice President for Graduate studies and Research. The Samples were confined to AAU's Faculty of Education's students on its two campuses—Main campus and science faculty. From the 180 questionnaires distributed, a total of 142 responses were received, giving a response rate of 79%. From the 142 questionnaires, 16 were not used due to incomplete answers. Thus, the total number of questionnaires used for analysis was 126.

The secondary sources of data used, among others, include the University's official web site, its strategic plan, a report on the current (AS-IS) situation, related books, journals, and student satisfaction surveys in various European and American Universities.

Sampling error was controlled using a large sample size collected at the two campuses. Measurement error was controlled with an instrument that was pre-tested for comprehension and unambiguous wording.

3.4. Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The instruments used to obtain the required data on measuring the graduates' satisfaction were questionnaire and interviews. A self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit responses from participants. The instrument was designed as a booklet, containing no questions on back cover pages. The procedures to produce a professional and well-constructed form were used. The front cover has an informative title about the researcher, the purpose of the study, request for cooperation, the incentive made available for those who would be part of the sample, and the kind of information respondents are kindly requested to provide. Doing these all enabled the researcher to give respondents a brief introduction to the issues of concern and thereby arouse their interest to fill out the questionnaire with great care as much as possible.

Developing a survey instrument is based on the identification of the intended outcome that is to be measured. For the purposes of this study the outcome to be measured was student satisfaction. The first step in survey development is a review of the literature specific to the outcome measurement issue of concern. Based on the literature, the Student Satisfaction Survey instrument was developed.

From various studies made so far in various foreign universities and colleges and reading of related literature, **7 (seven) major factors** which in turn are composed of numerous measuring items have been identified by the researcher. These factors are campus environment, registration effectiveness, academics, faculty/staff, infrastructure, skill developments or students' partial experience, and enrollment factors. From the 7 factors a total of more than 70 specific or individual attributes /questions items were constructed

as part of each questionnaire. There were also two sections that deal with the general characteristics of respondents and some general question.

From the factors, students were asked to rate the attributes based on their expectations when joining the university as well as their perceived experiences at AAU. The difference in scores between the expectation and perceived experiences have been obtained for further analysis.

3.4.1. The Design of the Questionnaire

There were 9 sections in the questionnaire. In the first 7 sections students were asked for rating the degree of importance of (on the left side of the column) and their level of satisfaction or their perceived experiences with (on the right side of the column) the attributes in each factor. Westbrook and Oliver (1991) in Noellevitz.com tested five instruments commonly used to measure customer satisfaction. They found that Likert-type and semantic differential scales have been shown to have the highest reliabilities. In addition, these two types of measures had the highest convergent and discriminant validities. Thus a five point Likert scale ranging from not important at all to very important was used to measure the students' expectations and the same scale ranging from not satisfied at all to very satisfied was used to measure the students' perceived experiences at AAU.

The last part of the questionnaire is section 8 and 9 which deal with the demographic variables of respondents, the students overall satisfaction rating, willingness to recommend others and second time enrollment, and comments on the university's strengths and weakness respectively among other things. This section has been moved from the beginning to the end of the questionnaire partly so that students went straight in to answering questions about their experience as students, and because research suggests that respondents can be put off answering questionnaires by having to give personal information: if respondents do not answer the questions at the end it does not matter as they have already responded to the other questions.

for easy completion and comparison purpose. The column on the left measures importance but the column on the right measures the level of students' satisfaction. Some developers of satisfaction surveys contend that in addition to satisfaction ratings, the questionnaire should contain an importance scale because dissatisfaction with the less important aspects of university is not as problematic as dissatisfaction with the more important aspects.

As it is often the case, different customers have different requirements, but at a group level there are some dominant characteristics they expect to receive at a certain standards. The strength of including importance score columns in the questionnaire relies in the utilization of customers (students), who are in the best position to speak out what is and what is not important with regard to a specific product or service implying that dissatisfaction with the less important aspects of university experience is not as problematic as dissatisfaction with the most important aspects. Relying solely on what the University posses may reflect dimensions that are not important for students, and could shade issues that are really important to students.

The first 66 items included within the questionnaire measure both importance and satisfaction. Following this, 9 items that measure only importance were included. In addition three more questions that ask for general level of satisfaction, opinion about expression of complaints, and students' reaction towards response(s) given make up part of the questionnaire. Finally, three demographic questions (age, discipline, and sex) and three generic items (university strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improving the graduates' learning experience at AAU. have been included. Thus, the total number of questions that constitute each questionnaire distributed to graduate students was more than 80. Students were expected to respond twice to each item – first by indicating how important it is that the expectation be met, and then again to indicate how satisfied they are that the expectation is being met. These are indicated on a 1 to 5 scale with 5 being high. The researcher then calculated a performance gap, which is importance minus satisfaction. The smaller the performance gap, the better the university is doing at meeting its students' expectations; the larger the performance gap, the more room for improvement there is to meet its students' expectations. That is items with large

performance gaps indicate areas on campus where students perceive that their expectations are not being adequately met

3.4.2. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire for comprehension of instructions, terminology, ease of statistical input, and reliability. A total of 30 graduates of the education faculty who have already received their masters were given the questionnaire to express their feeling about their education experience at AAU. They completed the questionnaires and wrote comments on the comprehensiveness of the instrument. Based on evaluation of responses, the following adjustments were made to the instrument: page numbers were added, duplicated items were removed, attributes that lack clarity were modified, and the demographic section was reordered.

The research advisor has also suggested changes with respect to the anchors for both importance and satisfaction level from neither satisfied nor dissatisfied to neutral and deletion of the does not apply anchor.

In order to assess the ease of analysis, the data from the pilot study was entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS) database. Since the satisfaction scale was constructed for this instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was run to assess reliability. Cronbach's alpha scores range from zero through one, with a coefficient closer to one indicating higher reliability. Reliability coefficients should be at least .70 or higher to be considered reliable for affective instruments (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). When the responses from the entire 66-item scale were computed, an Alpha of .77 was found on the set of importance scores and .88 on the set of satisfaction scores.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter deals with presenting the primary data obtained through questionnaires that were distributed to Addis Ababa University's Post-graduate education students who were about to complete their thesis and get graduated and the interview result; the analysis of these data using a descriptive method and interpretation of the data analyzed.

4.1. The Rating Scales

Because the Student Satisfaction questionnaire results in three different scores for each item, a significant amount of information is generated for the University decision makers.

- Importance score ratings reflect how strongly students feel about the expectation (the higher the score, the more important it is to a student, hence the stronger the expectation).
- Satisfaction ratings show how satisfied students are that AAU has met the expectation (the higher the score, the more satisfied the student).
- Performance gap scores (importance rating minus satisfaction rating) show how well AAU is meeting the expectation overall. A large performance gap score for an item (e.g., 1.5) indicates that the University is not meeting students' expectations, whereas a small or zero gap score (e.g., .50) indicates that AAU is meeting students' expectations, and a negative gap score (e.g., .25) indicates that it is exceeding students' expectations.

The scales provide a good overview of strengths and areas in need of improvement. Had there been a national survey (as is true in various nations like America—the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)) that measures student satisfaction across a broad spectrum of University/College life, the AAU's graduate student level of satisfaction could have been compared with it.

The total number of questionnaires distributed was 180 considering the return of incomplete and carelessly filled questionnaires; and absence of return at all in to account so that sufficient number of responses to make inference about the population would reasonably be possible. From this number of distributed questionnaires 140 were returned and of these only 126 useable and adequately filled questionnaires were used for analysis purpose.

The sample size and composition is good enough to make valid generalizations from the sample about the entire MA education students. The researcher can therefore make valid statistical inferences from the sample about the same at 95 % level of confidence with an acceptable and small margin of error.

Descriptive statistics were extensively used to detect the most and the least satisfactory items that students had experienced with their University programs and services. For instance, the mean responses of student satisfaction survey conducted by the researcher revealed university student dissatisfaction or very dissatisfaction for most areas. Using percentages, means, and qualitative written reports, student satisfaction with various dimensions and other additional concerns was summarized. The results are presented in table form to facilitate recognition and analysis of response patterns. Reference to interview results and a number of the respondents' qualitative comments are also made. An additional example of making use of descriptive statistics was to compare student satisfaction via frequency distribution between the departments in the faculty within a university.

The research measured nine major areas /dimensions of student satisfaction: campus environment effectiveness of registration, academics, faculty /staff, infrastructure, enrolment factors, general and demographic characteristics. (See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire). These scales/dimensions were created by combining items that presumably had a heuristic relationship to the implied intent of the scale name.

Several aspects of student perception of campus environment were measured in the first section. The section assesses the extent to which the University provides experiences

which promote a sense of campus pride and feelings of belonging. Students were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of community at the University, and if they feel safe when on campus. This scale also assesses the effectiveness of the institution's channels of communication for students. Within this section, students were first asked to rate the care and helpfulness of the campus. Additional questions asked respondents to rate the channels of students' complaints, safety and security and other similar questions.

The effectiveness of registration was second dimension used to assess issues associated with registration and billing. This scale also measures your institution's commitment to making this process as smooth and effective as possible.

Academic issues were also included under the title academics. Included in this dimension were questions that ask graduates to rate the level of importance of and satisfaction with such items as challenge and variety courses offered, assessment criteria, university reputation, and the university's commitment towards excellence. Graduates are expected to undertake research that complement their certificate award for successful completion of their masters, and thus it was necessary to incorporate items that ask for rating their thesis experience from its early beginning until submission of the final report.

The faculty / staff dimension assesses the perceived attitude of the University's staff toward students. This scale pinpoints the areas of your campus where quality service and personal concern for students are rated most and least favorably. This dimension consists of items such as administrators' approachability, faculty fairness while treating graduates, the treatment of graduates as mature individuals by instructors, and timeliness of feedback about students' progress in their respective program.

Student satisfaction with the infrastructures offered on the respective campuses of graduates was also examined. Students were asked to rate the level of importance and their corresponding level of satisfaction with such things as helpfulness and approachability of library staff, adequacy of library facilities, suitability of working space in the library, availability of printing facilities in the library and computer labs, and so forth.

An important part of graduate education is the professional development of the student in preparation for a career in the field of their choice. To gauge the extent to which AAU provides such support to its graduate students, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with graduate student confidence in managing research project, experience in analytical and communication skills. Students were also asked to rate departmental support for attendance at professional meetings, as well as opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research projects, professional presentations, and professional publications.

Finally, the survey attempted to identify the most important enrolment factors. This dimension includes cost, financial aid, sponsor’s preference, University advertisement, recommendations by friends and or family, ease of access to part time job opportunity.

4.2. Reliability

The modified version used to measure the graduates’ level of satisfaction is a reliable instrument. Cronbach's coefficient alpha is .844 for the set of satisfaction scores and is .771 for the set of importance scores.

Table 2: Comparison of the between the Respondents and Overall Population

<i>No</i>	Name of Department	<i>f</i>	Population (N=	Sample (n=126)
1	Educational Planning and Management	20	68	15.9%
2	English Language Education	19	63	15.1
3	Business Education	16	47	12.1
4	Curriculum and Teachers Professional Development studies	16	48	12.1
5	Physical Education	15	48	11.9
6	Physics Education	9	29	7.1
7	Special Needs	7	23	5.6
8	Geography and Environmental Education	7	25	5.6
9	Institute of Educational Research	6	19	4.8
10	Mathematics Education	6	19	4.8
11	Psychology	5	17	4
	Total	126	407	100%

Source: Education Registrar Office

The above table compares the samples taken from each department within the education faculty with the corresponding population. One can conclude from the table that the samples taken in each department were carefully selected so that they become representative of the population from which they are taken.

To have a clear picture about the personal characteristics of sample subjects under study / respondents, the data pertaining to it was summarized and revealed that 36.6%, 27.0, 29.4%, and 7 of them fall within the age range of 25-30, 31-36, 37-42, and >42 respectively. In terms of sex composition, 20 (15%) of the respondents were female.

4.3. Factors Influencing the Decision to Attend Addis Ababa University

The following table reflects the average of the importance score, based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the highest. The enrollment factors are indicated in descending order of importance for students at the Universities, along with the corresponding rank score as follows:

Table 3: Factors Influencing the Decision to Attend

<i>Enrollment Factors</i>				
<i>Item no</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Importance Mean</i>	<i>Std D</i>
1	Academic reputation	1	4.44	0.76
2	Your sponsor's preference	2	4.41	0.94
3	Campus appearance	3	4.10	0.79
4	Recommendations from family /friends etc	4	3.98	0.93
5	Size of the University	5	3.94	0.89
6	Greater Opportunity for part time work in Addis Ababa	6	3.85	1.38
7	Financial aid (for research and /or other purposes	7	3.72	1.14
8	Cost	8	2.84	1.25
9	The University’s advertisements	9	1.92	0.69

Source: *Questionnaire*

NB: The importance, satisfaction, and gap scores reported below and in the above table are rounded to two places.

Table 3 above shows the factors that students reported influencing their decision to attend the University. Academic reputation is the primary factor, along with sponsor’s preference and campus appearance also being major considerations. The cost factor

followed by the university’s advertisement is the least important in that order. The standard deviation 6 of the 9 items in the dimension—enrollment factors—suggests that the respondents have relatively the same feelings towards the level of importance of each of the items. A relatively higher variation in responses is depicted on item 6, 7, and 8.

4.4. The Campus Environment

The campus environment dimension is composed of such items depicted in the following table (4). In terms of the importance scores all of the items have been rated by students above average. This suggests that all of them are of great concerns to graduates. Put differently, the students greatly expected the university to fulfill them. On the fourth column which measures the level of students’ satisfaction, students rated each within the mid range (2.50-3.49). The last column clearly shows the discrepancies between the two measures across each item. But only item number 1, 3, and 5 have a performance gap of greater than 1.5. Thus, these three are the areas in the first dimension that the university is not meeting the students’ expectations.

Item number 2—the amount of parking space on campus is adequate—has got the least performance gap of all (it is below 0.5). Therefore, it can be concluded that the university has no problem of parking spaces on the campus. Of course, it should also be kept in mind that this item was rated by students as the least important one in the dimension.

Table 4: The Campus Environment

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
1	The campus you are in is a safe place after dark	4.55	2.75	1.80
2	The price of food available at cafeterias is economical for students	4.39	3.08	1.31
3	There is diverse selection of food available in the cafeteria	4.33	2.49	1.84
4	The campus provides enough space for students to relax on campus	4.29	2.98	1.31
5	The campus are caring and helpful	4.19	2.67	1.52
6	Your car is secured on campus	3.88	2.87	1.01
7	It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus	3.74	2.94	0.80
8	The amount of parking space on campus is adequate	3.53	3.18	0.35

Source: *Questionnaire*

4.5. Registration Effectiveness

Registration effectiveness was another attribute that was considered to be rated by students. As the table below (table 5) illustrates, all of the items were rated well above average (i.e., 4.24 and above) on importance scale. None of the satisfaction ratings are above the cutoff point implying that graduates were satisfied and very satisfied with no area on average that falls under this dimension. One unique finding is evident—a small performance gap between the importance and satisfaction score for item number 5 (i.e., admission staff are knowledgeable). Thus, let alone exceeding the students’ expectations the University could not even met expectations. It is just relatively good with respect to knowledge level of the admission staff. A relatively big performance gap was observed between the expected performances of the personnel involved in registration and the level of graduates’ satisfaction with it. 79.4% and 13.5% of the students thought helpfulness of personnel involved in registrations as being very important and important respectively but they found it be the most disappointing experience they had in relation to registration. Only 11% of the graduates were satisfied with it. Overall, only 27% of the graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with registration effectiveness.

Table 5: Registration Effectiveness

Registration Effectiveness				
Item No	Items	Importance Mean	Satisfaction Mean	Gap Mean
1	The personnel involved in registration are helpful	4.72	1.94	2.78
2	Registration takes place at the right time	4.65	2.55	2.10
3	Promptness of registration	4.60	2.58	2.02
4	admission policy is clear	4.43	2.63	1.80
5	admission staff are knowledgeable	4.24	3.03	1.21

Source: Questionnaire

4.6. Academics

The third major variable /dimension included in the questionnaire was academics. This section consists of 12 specific items that ask for various academic experiences of students. In all of the items that fall under this dimension, the students’ expectations exceeded the corresponding satisfaction scores. The performance gap score column

shows only five items (item number 2, 4, 6, 9, and 10) have below 1.5 positive deviations implying that the university never met the graduates' expectations when measured in terms of all other items.

Table 6: Academic Related Item Ratings

<i>Academics</i>				
<i>Item No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat* Mean</i>	<i>Per** Gap</i>
1	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this university	4.82	2.40	2.42
2	The University has a good reputation within the community	4.79	3.43	1.39
3	Students' work assessment is fair	4.79	2.30	2.49
4	The program I joined is a positive professional development experience	4.76	3.59	1.17
5	Most assignments required me to critically reflect on previous knowledge and new material	4.70	3.20	1.5
6	Courses are academically challenging/demanding	4.69	3.34	1.35
7	My instructors provide me with prompt feedback about my work	4.69	2.44	2.25
8	Clarity of information about assessment criteria	4.69	2.50	2.19
9	Variety of courses offered are adequate	4.68	3.21	1.47
10	The course outlines are relevant	4.52	3.52	1.00
11	The courses prepared me for employment	4.48	2.83	1.65
12	Tuitions paid is a worthwhile investment	4.27	2.40	1.87

Source: Questionnaire * Satisfaction Mean ** Performance Mean

The University claims that it is committed to providing an academically challenging and supportive learning environment that motivates students to be actively engaged in their own learning and be agents in decision making and governance. However, the satisfaction scores in the table above (table 6) shows that the University is not leaving up to its promises.

Whereas all of the items are of great concerns / expectations of students, all satisfaction scores are between 2.50 and 3.59 except for the 1st item (2.4), 3rd item (2.30), 7th item (2.44), and 12th item (2.40). Item 4 (The program I joined is a positive professional development experience) and 10 (The course outlines are relevant) resulted in satisfaction

on the part of the students. Even in these two items, a positive gap between importance (expectations) and satisfaction scores was obtained though it is below 1.5.

Table 7: Levels of satisfaction with academic related issues

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Ratings in %age</i>					<i>Total</i>
		<i>VS</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>VD</i>	
1	Courses are academically challenging	10.3	47.6	19.8	10.3	11.9	100%
2	Variety of courses offered are adequate	13.5	44.4	10.3	12.7	19.0	“
3	The courses prepared me for employment	13.5	31.0	9.5	16.7	29.4	“
4	The course outlines are relevant	18.3	44.4	20.6	4.8	11.9	“
5	Clarity of information about assessment criteria	0.8	31.7	11.8	28.7	26.7	“
6	Students’ work assessment is fair	2.4	14.3	11.8	48.4	23	“
7	Most assessments required me to critically reflect on previous knowledge and new material	14.3	38.9	12.7	20.6	13.5	“
8	My instructors provide me with prompt feedback about my work	7.9	21.4	15.1	18.3	37.3	“
9	The program I joined is a positive professional development experience	19	49.2	12	11.1	8.7	“
10	Tuition fee is a worthwhile investment	3.2	12	34.9	21.4	28.6	“
11	There is a commitment for academic excellence on this university	2.4	20.6	23.8	21.4	31.7	“
12	The University has good reputation with in the community	23.8	30.2	23	11	12	“

Source: *Questionnaire*

With respect to academic related issues as measured in terms of percentage ratings of graduates’ level of satisfaction, 57% and 57.9% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the challenges and variety of the courses offered at the university respectively. The percentages of graduates who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the extent to which the courses they took prepared them for employment (46.1%), fairness in students’ work assessment (71.4%), clarity of information about assessment

criteria (55.4%), existence of commitment for academic excellence on the university (53.1%), worthiness of tuition fee (50%), and promptness of feedbacks provided by instructors to students' work (55.6%) are greater than those who were satisfied or very satisfied with the same. Thus, these are one of the areas in need of improvement in this particular dimension.

How important is academic advising to students—and what aspects of advising are students most and least satisfied with? The following table and analysis builds on the considerable evidence to date that students view advising as an important and needed service. It also documents specific strengths and challenges related to the advising process.

Students rated academic advising as one of their most important needs. Only one specific aspect of advising—adequacy of skill and subject knowledge of advisors to support students' research work—was relatively satisfying to students. The institution has work remaining to be done to meet student expectations for advising, ranging from increasing advisors' level of concern about the success of students as individuals to, improving advisors' exertion of real effort to understand difficulties graduates face while conducting researches.

Table 8: Academic advising

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Sat</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Gap</i> <i>Mean</i>
1	My academic advisor has the skill and subject knowledge to adequately support my research	4.90	3.36	1.54
2	My academic advisor make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	4.90	3.26	1.64
3	I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my advisor	4.88	3.21	1.67
4	My advisor provides helpful feedback on my research progress	4.85	3.18	1.67
5	My academic advisor is available when I need him/her	4.84	3.12	1.72
6	My academic advisor is available during consultation hour	4.83	3.01	1.82
7	I have been given good guidance in my related literature search by my advisor	4.83	2.94	1.89
8	My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual	4.78	2.87	1.91

Source: Questionnaire

To clearly see the extent of graduates’ satisfaction with academic advising, the specific areas that fall under this dimension are presented in the table below (table 9).

Table 9: Levels of Satisfaction with Academic Advising

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Ratings in %age</i>					<i>Total</i>
		<i>VS</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>VD</i>	
1	My academic advisor is available during consultation hour	17.5	21.4	19.8	20.6	20.6	100%
2	My academic advisor is available when I need him/her	9.5	32.5	13.5	23.8	20.6	“
3	My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual	19.1	42.1	9.5	18.3	11.1	“
4	My academic advisor has the skill and subject knowledge to adequately support my research	31	22.2	18.3	15.3	13.3	“
5	My academic advisor makes a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	11.1	13.5	17.5	20.6	37.3	“
6	I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my advisor	16.7	32.5	16.7	14.3	19.8	“
7	I have been given good guidance in my related literature search by my advisor	17.5	32.5	21.4	10.3	18.3	“
8	My advisor provides helpful feedback on my research progress	26.2	19	25.4	5.6	23.8	“

Source: Questionnaire *primary data*

When compared to those graduates who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each area depicted in the above table, the percentage of graduates who were satisfied or very satisfied are relatively large. 45.56% of the graduates expressed their delight or satisfaction to overall academic advising effectiveness, about 36.71% of them were disappointed at it, and the remaining 17.7 % were neutral.

One of the missions of the University is to produce graduates that will become leaders in their communities and public services, accomplished professionals in their respective disciplines, and capable of becoming fully competitive in all sectors including the private and public sectors, in academic institutions and in the international community(AAU Strategic Plan). However, in this regard, graduate education students are very negative. Only a small proportion of graduates were satisfied and very satisfied with the areas pertaining to academic advising.

4.7. Faculty / Staff

When it comes to faculty /staff, students were asked to rate both the level of importance and satisfaction with issues related to fairness, approachability, knowledge, helpfulness and the staff’s way of treatments. As it is very common in other dimensions analyzed so far, importance rating of the items in the table below was rated very well above average. They are very important. The corresponding satisfaction scores depict that item 3 and item 6 are below the average. Students were dissatisfied with both these items.

In all cases (from item 1 through item 6 in table 10 below), the performance gap scores are well above 1.5 which suggests a need for special attention for improvement on the part of the university. Whereas the University has an objective of developing academic administration dedicated to graduate studies and research, the result below shows that it is not keeping its promises in this regard.

Table 10: Expectations and satisfaction with the Faculty / Staff

<i>Faculty / Staff</i>				
<i>N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Per. Gap</i>
1	Library staff are helpful	4.92	3.35	2.96
2	Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	4.86	2.56	2.30
3	Teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	4.83	2.44	2.39
4	Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field	4.80	3.04	1.76
5	Faculty provide timely feedback about students progress in a program	4.75	3.03	1.72
6	Administrators are approachable to students	4.69	2.10	2.59

Source: *Questionnaire*

4.8. Infrastructures

The next table (table 11 below) relates to questions that fall under the fifth dimension named as infrastructure. For the purpose of easy analysis the dimension is treated in two ways: the first being those infrastructures related to libraries and the second involves those that pertain to computers and other infrastructures.

The University aimed at enhancing educational support services and as it can be seen from the table all items are rated well above average on importance scales. The University has got a relatively good performance score in terms of library collection for the students' respective program of study (a gap of only 1.27), adequacy of library opening hours (with a gap of 1.28), attractiveness of the libraries' environment (with a gap of 1.47), and waiting time to get the library service (with a performance gap of 1.33). The highest performance gap is observed for item 4 (adequate availability of copy machines).

The satisfaction rating for item number 4, 6, 8 and 11 are all below the average and none of the issues of graduates concern did not result in a satisfaction score of above average—graduates did not report good satisfaction with any single area except adequacy of library opening hours considered important or very important.

Table 11: Infrastructures Related to the Libraries

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp.</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Sat.</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Per.</i> <i>Gap</i>
1	Library facilities are adequate	4.94	2.25	2.69
2	Library opening hours is adequate	4.91	3.63	1.28
3	Copy machines availability is adequate	4.84	1.84	3
4	Library books are helpful	4.83	2.91	1.92
5	Electronic resources like journals, news letters, etc are available	4.76	2.29	2.47
6	Libraries collection for my program of study is helpful	4.72	3.45	1.27
7	There exists Quality printing facilities in the library	4.65	2.36	2.29
8	The libraries environment (noise, heating, ambience) is conducive	4.57	3.10	1.47
9	Waiting time to get library service is reasonable	4.46	3.33	1.33
10	I can get a suitable working space in the library	4.44	2.42	2.02

Source: *Questionnaire*

Table 12: Ratings of Infrastructures Related to Computer Support Services

<i>No</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Per Mean</i>
1	Access to the Internet service is easy	4.94	2.21	2.73
2	The computer labs are adequate and accessible	4.92	2.02	2.90
3	Opening hours of computer lab rooms is suitable	4.91	2.97	1.94
4	Availability of audio visual aids	4.86	1.72	3.14
5	There is sufficient number of computers for students	4.83	1.87	2.96
6	Availability of printing in the computer lab	4.75	1.90	2.85
7	Training in the use of computers	4.69	1.73	2.96

Source: Questionnaire

Where as the importance ratings do not greatly vary across dimensions and specific issues under the dimensions, the satisfaction ratings on infrastructures related to computer support services as depicted in the above table (table 11) is below the average or cutoff point except suitability of opening hours of computer lab rooms for which the performance score is much better than all other items in relative terms.

The performance gap for each of the items depicted in table 11 is very well above 1.5 which implies that they are among the areas in need of improvement.

4.9. Skill Development / Student Partial University Experience

Respondents were also asked to express their feelings with respect to items that fall under a scale called skill development / student partial university experience. Skills related communication, analysis, working cooperatively with team members, research and independent learning were areas about which graduates expressed their attitudes.

Table 13: Skill Development / Student Partial University Experience

<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Sat</i> <i>Mean</i>	<i>Per</i> <i>Mean</i>
1	My experience so far had helped me to develop a range of communication skills	4.92	3.51	1.41
2	My department provides opportunity for social contact with other research students	4.92	2.30	2.62
3	As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently	4.91	3.60	1.31
4	The University helped me to work cooperatively in a group	4.83	2.90	1.93
5	My experience so far has improved my analytical skills	4.80	2.90	1.90
6	My department provides a good seminar program for research students	4.80	2.71	2.09
7	I am able to experience intellectual growth here	4.75	3.03	1.71
8	My department provides me to become involved in the broader research culture	4.63	2.12	2.51
9	As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project	4.61	2.70	1.91

Source: *Questionnaire*

In relation to skill development scale (table 13 above) students reported that the experiences they had during their stay at AAU helped them to develop communication skills very well. The second least gap score observed among the items in the dimension is “my experience so far had helped me develop communication skills” which is preceded by the third item. The highest gap score (2.62) is observed corresponding to item 2—my department provides opportunity for social contact with other research students. This is followed by item 8 with a performance gap of 2.51. About 44% of the students reported that they have gained intellectual growth while about 29% of them have expressed their dissatisfaction.

With the exception of item 1 and 3 above, the University failed to meet graduates’ expectations. This suggests that the graduate program at AAU which has a purpose of producing qualified, competent, and confident graduates has a lot more to do to fill the gap especially in the area of research.

Among all items in the above table, students provided above average ratings in terms of satisfaction scores only to independent learning and communication skills. Where as

about 19.1 % and 19.8 % of the students expressed their dissatisfaction/very dissatisfaction; 62.7% and 65.1% for them reported satisfaction /very satisfaction with these individual items respectively particular dimension. Over all, about 46% of the students expressed their dissatisfaction with this particular dimension.

To see the gap score in general, the best place to begin is by looking at the big picture and understanding the areas on campus that matter most to students. The following table summarizes the importance, satisfaction, and performance gaps for the 7 areas (scales) included in the questionnaires distributed to graduates. The scales are listed in order of importance. This table is followed by the scale scores that summarize the top 25 items with in the scales with the largest and smallest performance gaps.

4.10. Scale Summary

The issues above are specific items from the more than 70 items available on questionnaire. However, the questionnaire also groups survey items into 7 scales, items that fit into broader categories related to the student experience. Ranking the scales offers insight into what graduates value across the full spectrum of the University experience. The scale summary helps to understand the importance and satisfaction scores for each composite scale. The responses of graduates led to this ranking of importance scales:

Table 14: Scale summary

N0	Scales / Dimensions	Imp Mean	Sat Mean	Gap Mean
1	Academic Advising (b=13-20)	4.85	3.07	1.78
2	Skill development / Student partial University Experience	4.79	2.86	1.93
3	Infrastructure	4.79	2.37	2.42
4	Faculty / Staff	4.78	2.63	2.15
5	Academics (a=1-12)	4.66	2.93	1.73
6	Registration Effectiveness	4.52	2.55	1.97
7	Campus Environment	4.10	2.87	1.23

Source: *Questionnaire*

From the table above, it can be seen that academic advising is the scale which was rated as the most important of all with campus environment being the least. Very little difference between the first three scales in terms of importance is observed. Regarding the satisfaction score, however, the scale which was rated as the least important gained the smallest performance gap suggesting that it requires the least attention relative to others. The most important scale was rated as being the third in terms of gap score and the first in terms of satisfaction score though it is not above average. Just similar to individual item rating results, the University never met any of the students' concern in terms of dimensions / composite scores.

Faculty and infrastructures are the two dimensions with the greatest performance gap. Interaction with faculty is a key concern among students. Faculty need to foster opportunities for regular interaction with their students in order to promote student success. These opportunities for increased communication also improve the faculty's understanding of students' unique circumstances and can help to improve the faculty-student interaction. This helps students meet expectations and promotes faculty satisfaction with the performance of students.

In order to deliver its core teachings and research missions, AAU needs to have adequate and quality infrastructures. And thus, the scale infrastructure is just among the three top important dimensions as indicated by respondents. It is also where the highest performance gap score is observed. It suggests that the university has to be responsive to students' call to action as it is an issue of top priority among the seven scales measured followed by faculty (2.15), registration effectiveness (1.97), skill development (1.93), academic advising (1.78), academics (1.73) and campus environment (1.23). In an ideal situation, the dimensions of educational experience with the greatest importance should be the dimensions where students obtain the greatest satisfaction.

Table 15: Rank-ordering of the top 15 Largest Performance Gaps Reported by the Respondents

<i>No</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>	<i>Imp Rank</i>
1	Availability of audio visual aids	3.14	15
2	Copy machines availability is adequate	3.01	16
3	Training in the use of computers	2.94	41
4	There is sufficient number of computers for students	2.94	18
5	The computer labs are adequate and accessible	2.92	3
6	Availability of printing in the computer lab	2.86	34
7	The personnel involved in registration are helpful	2.78	38
7	Access to the Internet service is easy	2.74	2
8	Library facilities are adequate	2.70	1
10	My department provides opportunity for social contact with other research students	2.62	43
11	Administrators are approachable to students	2.60	42
12	Students' work assessment is fair	2.54	31
13	My department provides me to become involved in the broader research culture	2.50	48
14	My academic advisor make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	2.50	10
15	Electronic resources like journals, news letters, etc are available	2.49	32

Source: *Questionnaire*

The average performance gap of the above 15 items is 2.75. These items are not the only once with positive performance gap but the top fifteen. The remaining items are shown in appendix C with in the institutional summary.

Table 15 above depicts the top fifteen largest performance gaps (all those at 1.50 or above) as reported by AAU graduate respondents. A review of the largest performance gaps revealed two things:

1. Students are concerned about a wide variety of campus issues, from audio visual aids to copy machines to training to use computers to availability of printing to helpfulness of library staff and worthiness of tuitions invested, and
2. There is no area / dimension that is devoid of performance gap with respect to at least any one of the respective items below 1.5. Thus, we cannot say that most of the gaps are reported in any single dimension / scale. However, when the items were rank-ordered by importance, the value that survey respondents placed on infrastructures clearly emerges especially in relation to library and lab facilities. These are followed by academic issues.

The above table also reveals that some the areas with the largest performance gap are relatively less important in the eyes of the students which may suggest giving attention primarily to the remaining areas with high importance score against high performance gap.

4.11. General Level of Satisfaction

In the survey, graduating students provided information about their satisfaction with the University in general. For various aspects of the University as a whole, graduating students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction by indicating: very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

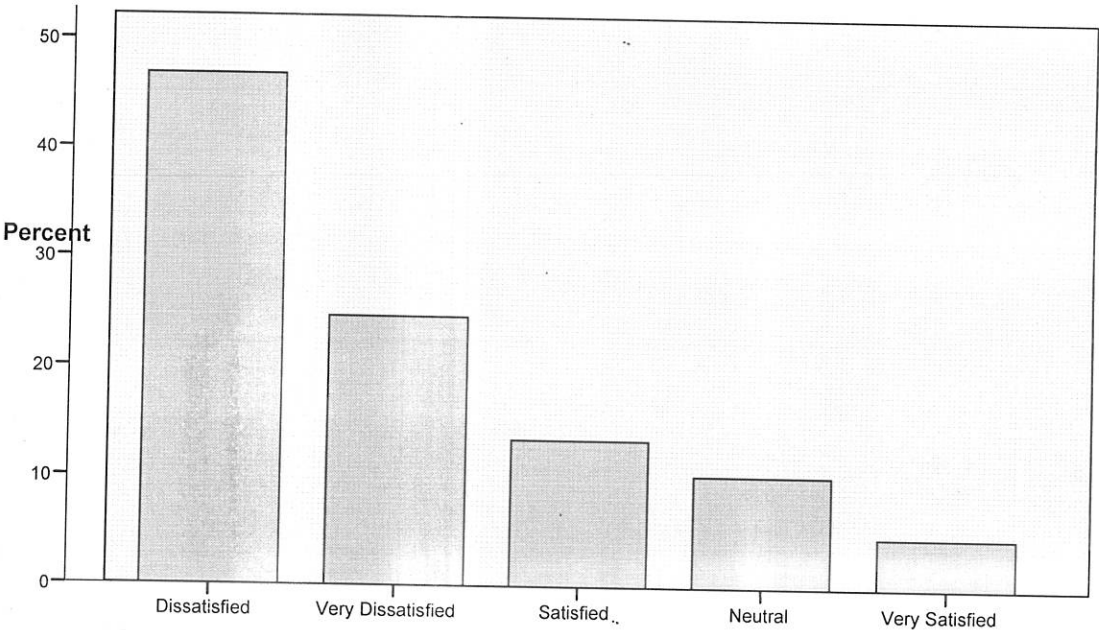
Table 16: In General how Satisfied are you with your Overall Graduate Experience at AAU/ in your Specific Campus?

Rating Scales	F	%age	Cum. Percent
Dissatisfied	59	46.8	46.8
Very Dissatisfied	31	24.6	71.4
Satisfied	17	13.5	84.9
Neutral	13	10.3	95.2
Very Satisfied	6	4.8	100
Total	126	100.0	100.0

N	Valid	126
	Missing	0
Mean		2.27
Std. Deviation		1.12

Accordingly, 13.5% percent reported that they are satisfied and only 4.8 percent are very satisfied but 24.6%of them are very dissatisfied and the mega part 46.8 % are dissatisfied and the remaining are neutral with the overall experience they gained at AAU. The standard deviation shows about 1 point variation among responses from the mean score.

Figure 3: In general, how satisfied are you with your overall graduate experience at AAU / in your campus



It would be normal to think that if customers are satisfied with the services they are offered with by a company, they would talk favorably about the company and its offers, and recommend others to be customers like them but they would transmit negative word of mouth if the reverse occurs. According to Noel-Levitz, "Students who find an institution just the right place, the institution's courses and professors stimulating, who are challenged and energized and happy and enthusiastic will go back home and talk up the institution to their friends." Surprisingly, although most of them are not satisfied especially those students of business education, geography and environmental education, and mathematics education (as shown in table 13 below) with their university educational

experiences, 81% and 83 % of graduates would like to recommend AAU to others and enroll again the University if they had to go all over again any way respectively.

Table 17: Satisfaction Levels by Department

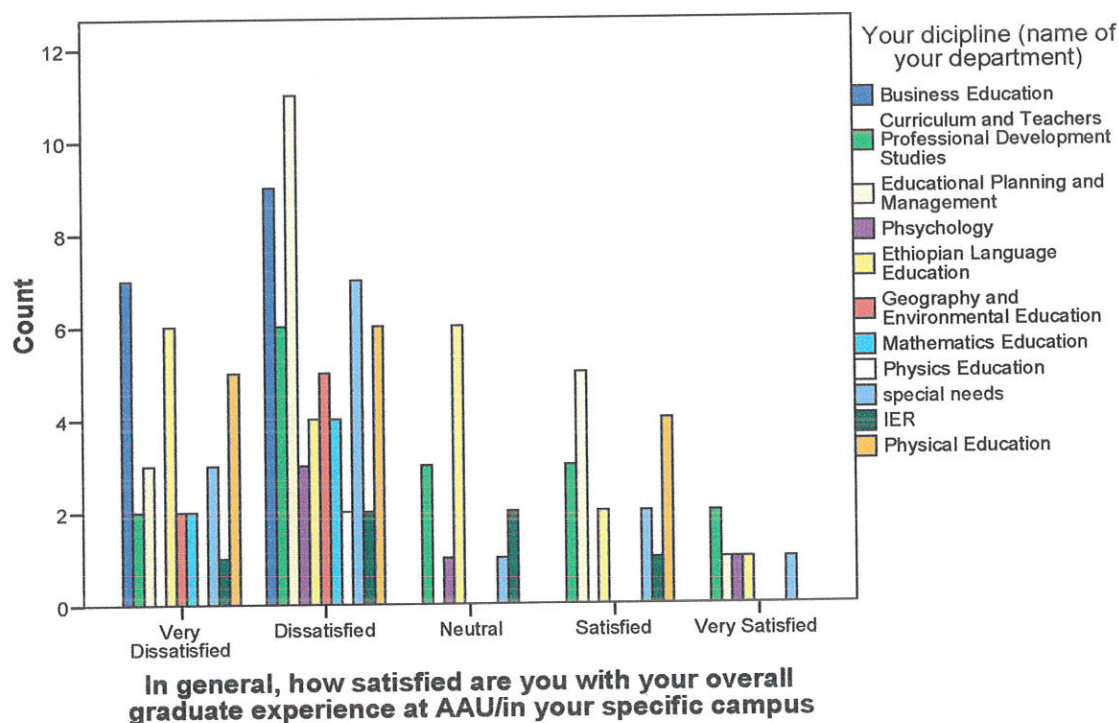
<i>N</i> <i>o</i>	<i>Departments</i>	<i>Satisfaction Ratings in %age</i>					Total
		<i>VS</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>VD</i>	
1	Business Education	-	-	-	56.25	43.75	100%
2	Curriculum and teachers professional development studies	12.5	18.75	18.75	37.5	12.5	“
3	Educational planning and management	5	25	-	55	15	“
4	Psychology	20	-	20	60	-	“
5	Ethiopian Language Education	5.26	10.53	31.58	21.05	31	“
6	Geography and Environmental Education	-	-	-	71.43	28.57	“
7	Mathematics Education	-	-	-	66.67	33.33	“
8	Physics Education	11.33	-	10	66.67	12	“
9	Special Needs	-	28.57	-	42.86	28.57	“
10	Institute of Educational Research	-	15.3	34.7	33	17	“
11	Physical Education	-	26.67	-	40	33.33	“

Source: *Questionnaire*

4.12. Satisfaction by Department

The differences in the levels of satisfaction among departments surveyed can be clearly observed by looking at the following bar chart. The highest rate of dissatisfaction was reported by educational planning and management students followed by business education students, Ethiopian languages and special needs in that order. The highest rate of satisfaction in the faculty of education was reported by curriculum and teachers professional development studies followed by psychology, mathematics and special needs.

Figure 4: Level of Satisfaction by Department
Bar Chart



Students were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each statement of expectation by responding to the question “How satisfied are you that your institution has met this expectation?” Responses reflected the degree to which students felt their institution was meeting the expectation, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of student satisfaction. These areas are identified as follows in table 12. These areas are from dimension five (item 1), three (item 3 and 4), and six (item 2). No item in other dimensions resulted in satisfaction or great satisfaction.

Table 18: Expectations Considered the most Satisfying

<i>N^o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
1	Library opening hours is adequate	4.91	3.63	1.28
2	As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently	4.91	3.60	1.31
3	The program I joined is a positive professional development experience	4.76	3.59	1.17
4	The course outlines are relevant	4.52	3.52	1.00

Source: Questionnaire

On importance scores adequacy of library opening hours, improved independent learning ability, professional development of experience, and relevance of course outlines were rated as very important—91.3%, 92.3%, 77%, and 54.2% respectively.

In contrast to the expectations considered most satisfying by students, the following table illustrates those areas that resulted in the most dissatisfaction

Table 19: Expectations Considered the most Dissatisfying

<i>N o</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
1	Library facilities are adequate	4.94	2.24	2.70
2	Access to the Internet service is easy	4.94	2.20	2.74
3	The computer labs are adequate and accessible	4.93	2.01	2.92
4	My academic advisor make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	4.90	2.40	2.50
5	My department provides opportunity for social contact with other research students	4.92	2.30	2.62
6	Availability of audio visual aids	4.86	1.72	3.14
7	Copy machines availability is adequate	4.85	1.84	3.01
8	There is sufficient number of computers for students	4.83	1.86	2.97
9	Teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	4.83	2.43	2.40
10	I have adequate access to the equipments necessary for my research	4.83	2.40	2.43
11	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus	4.82	2.40	2.42
12	Students' work assessment is fair	4.78	2.24	2.54
13	Electronic resources like journals, news letters, etc are available	4.77	2.28	2.49
14	Availability of printing in the computer lab	4.75	1.89	2.86
15	The personnel involved in registration are helpful	4.72	1.94	2.78
16	Training in the use of computers	4.69	1.73	2.94
17	Administrators are approachable to students	4.69	2.09	2.60
18	My instructors provide me with prompt feedback about my work	4.69	2.44	2.25
19	My department provides me to become involved in the broader research culture	4.62	2.12	2.50
20	I can get a suitable working space in the library	4.44	2.42	2.02
21	Tuitions paid is a worthwhile investment	4.27	2.39	1.88

Source: Questionnaire

Most of the areas where students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with fall under two of the 7 dimensions—infrastructure and academic related issues—considered. All of these areas require urgent consideration by the university.

A complete institutional summary which reviews the importance and satisfaction scores, item by item, and the performance gap scores; and reveals the average ratings between the two extremes together with the extremes is provide in appendix C.

In section 8 part of the questionnaire, student were provided with questions like “is there any readily available channel of expressing complaints in the University?”, “Have you ever expressed any complaints?” and “how were you satisfied with the responses you received for the complaints?” Responses to the first question showed that 90% of the students said no and 6% of them do not exactly know the existence of the channel and the remaining 4% reported the existence of the channel. 94 % of the graduates reported that they never expressed their complaints to a party they think is concerned and the remaining 6% have expressed their complaints. When it comes to the last questions, a significant portion of the graduates (85 %)—out of those who expressed their complaints—reported that they were very dissatisfied, 11 % dissatisfied, 3% satisfied, and 1% very satisfied with the responses they received. None of them were very satisfied with the responses.

From the semi-structured interview made, the response obtained to a similar question as above is that very few students express complaints which are usually related to request for thesis advisors change and additional monetary support for conducting thesis, and thus the office interviewed believes that graduates are satisfied with the educational experiences they received at AAU. Put differently, the University thinks that if graduates do not complain, they are satisfied if not delighted with their educational experiences. But comparing this with the above result suggests that lack of placing complaints does not mean that graduates are satisfied or very satisfied with what they are provided with. This may be partly because of the absence of readily available channel of expressing complaints and lack of knowledge about where to complain. The interview has also

revealed lack of systematic students' complaint handling procedure which suggests a room for improvement.

When asked about whether they have ever expressed their complaints to any concerned party, students (only 12% of them) answered yes and the remaining (88%) students have never done so. A similar kind of response has been gained from the section 9 (that asks for students to express their views about the strengths and weaknesses of the university) part of the questionnaire.

4.13. Strengths and Weakness and General Comments

Though putting responses to open ended questions (about the University's strengths, weaknesses, and general comments) together is difficult, the researcher tried his level best to narrate and summarize the most common ones in as much meaningful way as possible as follows:

Strengths

1. The University's environment (campus sizes and appearance) is very appealing to the senses of graduates.
2. Provision of education opportunity for some special groups like the blind.
3. Some modes of assessments (examinations) are good irrespective of the grading system (habit) in place
4. Existence of knowledgeable tenured academic staff regardless of their willingness and commitment to share with students.
5. The location of the university is at the very center of the country where many opportunities exist.
6. Good reputation.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of treating graduate students as mature individuals.
2. Opening new graduate programs without equipping them the required inputs especially qualified human power.

3. In almost every corner of the University ethical principles do exist but most of them are not respected by the staff. The administrative staff is very helpless / uncooperative, irresponsive and lack integrity.
4. Relatively well designed courses exist in the University but they are not delivered in the way graduates can grasp practical skills and knowledge especially in the area of research work.
5. Lack of commitment of the academic staff to the university.
6. Missing or at least coming lately to classes by instructors
7. Absence of ownership to problems graduates face
8. Poor control over the teaching-learning interaction between the instructors and students.

Changes to be made to improve graduates' learning experience:

1. Furnishing the graduate library's with up-to-date reference materials and sufficient computers with good internet access
2. The University has to struggle to (or as to some respondents to regain) good recognition at least across various nation in Africa in not in the world.
3. Latrines / toilets (especially those close to the libraries) should be clean enough at any time with sufficient supply of water.
4. Access to accommodation even at market price should be given to graduates
5. Modes of assessment should more often than not require analytical and conceptual understanding.
6. The administrative staff in general and people working in registrar offices in particular should, if possible, be given intensive training with respect to how to serve students well to meet their expectations.
7. The various parties in university should work as part of a good system rather than as separate bodies.
8. Professors with wide ranging research experiences should be encouraged to share with students.

Some of the strengths and weakness identified here are similar to what has been obtained by the University's strategic plan committee which was organized for designing the university wide strategic plan.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter deals with the last three parts of the study—the summary of major findings, conclusions and recommendations on measuring students' experience: a survey on graduates' level of satisfaction at AAU.

5.1. Summary

- Academic reputation, sponsor's preferences, campus appearance, and recommendations from family / friends were the most important factors that influenced graduates to attend AAU.
- The adequacy of parking space on campus has got the least performance gap of all with in the campus environment attributes. Of course, it should also be kept in mind that this item was rated by students as the least important one in the dimension.
- Even though the University claims that it is committed to providing an academically challenging and supportive learning environment that motivates students to be actively engaged in their own learning and be agents in decision making and governance, the satisfaction scores with this respect shows that the University is not leaving up to its promises.
- When compared to those graduates who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with each area depicted in the above table, the percentage of graduates who were satisfied or very satisfied are relatively large. 45.56% of the graduates expressed their delight or satisfaction to overall academic advising effectiveness, about 36.71% of them were disappointed at it, and the remaining 17.7 % were neutral.
- Whereas the University has an objective of developing academic administration dedicated to graduate studies and research, the result obtained in relation to staff showed that it is not keeping its promises in this regard.
- Some essential infrastructures like copy machines, audiovisual aids, printers, and sufficient number of computers are missing both in computer labs and libraries.

- Graduates were able to develop a range of communication skill and improved their ability to learn independently. Thus, they were satisfied with such specific attributes.
- Two most important concerns in the skill development dimension—improved ability to learn independently and communication skills—resulted in satisfaction corresponding scores.
- Infrastructure and registration effectiveness were among the most important composite scales but received the least average satisfaction scores.
- Individual items analysis revealed that adequacy of library facilities and amount of parking space are the most and the least important concerns respectively. But in terms of gap score the latter led the university to meet students concern.
- A significant portion of students do not know the existence of any complaints handling mechanism and have never expressed their complaints to a party they think is concerned about.
- The university's reputation, its environment, existence of knowledgeable tenured staff, opportunity for some special groups like the blind and its location form part of the university's strengths as reported by graduates.
- Lack of appropriate treatment of graduates, helpfulness, and commitment were in the staff side were part of the weaknesses identified.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the data presentations and analysis made in the previous chapter, the researcher drew the following conclusions:

1. The survey has produced a wealth of valuable feedback from respondents concerning their University educational experiences as students using the range of services on offer. Students have expressed high satisfaction with the adequacy of library opening hours, improved independent learning ability, professional development experience, and relevance of course outlines. These individual items were also among those rated by graduates as the most important once.
2. The overall impression given by students is that they are considerably more dissatisfied than satisfied. However, on individual item basis, graduates' level of satisfaction varied from item to item. The mean satisfaction score for all items (grouped in scale wise) was 2.75 which falls within the range of neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
3. Although all of the scales / dimensions except adequacy of parking space (a specific attribute within the campus environment dimension) were rated as important or very important, the corresponding measures on satisfaction gained uncomfortably dissatisfaction and high dissatisfaction except the items identified in the first conclusion above. Thus, they are issues which can be worrying for students and possibly distract them from their studies if appropriate support is not available. These areas require careful investigation to ascertain the best way forward and develop suitable action plans for this purpose. Some evidences have, of course, been observed that the university made progress in raising satisfaction levels and lowering dissatisfaction levels. It is important in terms of morale for this achievement to be recognized and valued as a model for further progress.
4. Reviewing the satisfaction and priorities of students also reveals the following conclusions:
 - Skill development, issues related to the faculty, and infrastructures are of paramount importance to graduates. Of course the other scale measures like academics, effectiveness of registration and the campus environment

are not very far away from the above three scales. The performance gaps observed in the first three scales is very high suggesting that the University is not leaving up to students' expectations. In contrast the latter three scales results showed better performance gaps (i.e., lower performance gaps) with campus environment least followed by registration effectiveness and then by academics.

- More than 50 of the items (specific expectations) were unmet by the University.
- Infrastructure dimension was rated among those that matter most to students but it was the least satisfying of all.
- About 70% of the graduates were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their University experiences. Only 13.5 % and 4.8% of them were satisfied and very satisfied respectively.
- The majority of students (90%) believed that there exists no readily available channel of handling students' complaints implying that the University is not keeping track of students' voice. And about 94 % of them have never placed any complaint.
- There were no individual questions with high importance ratings (mean of 3.49 or higher) and small performance gaps (gap = 0.50 or less) indicating that the University is not doing a good job in meeting student expectations. It has got a long way to go to meet expectations of students.
- The University lacks a readily available channel of expressing complaints
- In no one area the University exceeded the students' expectations.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions made with respect to the area of study, the researcher recommends the following he believed would fill gaps identified in the study.

1. A combined methodology, implementing a paper based and online questionnaire in order to attain respondents' feedback on the University should be used so that students would make use of either of the alternatives they prefer, have plenty of time for preparation, and to get greater response rate. This, of course, should be comprehensive (encompassing all faculties and PhD students to attain better representation at the university with varied areas / issues of concern), realize quality emphasis throughout the process, be administered at the right time (the time the students are about to graduate and some time after graduation—alumni—to get more insight about the relevance and contribution of their experience at the university to the work world).

Finally, the result should be reported to all concerned via various ways like internal and external publication (the university's newspaper, newsletter, local newspapers, and official web site). Conducting satisfaction assessment is a way to show students that the institution cares about their perceptions and their educational experience, but an even more significant way that an institution can show that it cares is by actively responding to student-identified issues. Once data has been collected, actively reviewed, and shared throughout the campus, then initiatives can be identified to respond to student concerns. Data on the shelf has no power; data actively used to drive decision making can have the power to improve the success of the institution.

The university has to distribute results across departments to aid in self assessment for on-going improvement of processes and procedures. This information may include, but not limited to, what do University students think about studying at AAU, what students like about the university, what they want to see improved, etc. Put differently, the University has to announce the actions already taken and /or underway as a result of the findings of the survey. The survey can actually be administered by an independent marketing research agency

in consultation with the concerned body for the purpose of getting greater credibility in connection with the survey results.

Communicating any measure that is taken as a result of the survey would help students ensure whether students' voice is heard and are invaluable. Students have the right to be informed of action that has resulted in the expression of their views. This just closes the communication loop. Students are more likely to give reliable feedback if they are aware that it is taken seriously and they are informed of what happens to it.

2. The University has to make it easy for its customers to complain and in return the customers will make it easy for it to improve. A dramatic lesson was learned by the researcher involved in this study; the best-in-business universities want their customers to complain. Informed customers know how their university services should work. If things are not working, customers are the first to know. Customers who are dissatisfied tell more than twice as many people about it as those who are happy with the institution's service. The best universities use feedback from personal visit and surveys to identify and resolve root causes of dissatisfaction and to change their services to ensure that the customer will be quickly satisfied. A strong and more vigorous complaints handling system should be in place. This would give the University an opportunity to meet if not exceeding students' expectations related to their educational experiences.
3. The University should strengthen its recent offers of developmental courses (on research and computational skills for example) to improve academic skills of graduates. Skill development is a crucial component of graduate education, and it is the faculty's responsibility to ensure students receive regular, informative, fair, and helpful advice and contribution at all stages of their careers as graduate students. The researcher recommends that graduate advising be treated as an important component of teaching and service as part of normal faculty personnel reviews.

4. Developing strategies that will encourage formal and informal contact between faculty/staff and students is essential so as to partly enhance graduates educational experience by the University is essential. Building on a culture of continuous improvement needs the free exchange of views about teaching between students and staff. Both students and staff must understand each others' expectations. This culture must both capitalize on the pluralism of evaluation strategies; yet enable the university to provide evidence for improving quality of services and programs.
5. The University would be better-off if it establishes an office devoted exclusively to the improvement of the educational experiences at large with a responsibility of conducting continues student satisfaction survey on a systematic basis by focusing on the "gaps" between student expectations and satisfaction of educational programs and services and should address those factors where graduates get dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. Continuity is of paramount importance as a satisfaction study in any given time is merely a snapshot. Performing research on a consistent basis adds a time element. Many renowned Universities conduct annual satisfaction assessments. The annual reviews help the University keep its priorities in tune with the market. This is important because student satisfaction is a moving target – as soon as the University improves anything, its customers' attitudes shift; usually, they require more. The University leaders must understand how satisfied students are with their educational experience—both inside and outside of the classroom—in order to best serve those students. By collecting satisfaction data from students on a regular basis, campuses can determine where they are best serving students and where there are areas for improvement. As trends may be observed in student perceptions of all aspects of their total learning experience, it is possible to gauge the success of management both in tackling problems and maintaining standards.
6. The University has to enhance the physical plan and facilities particularly important to students (e.g., library resources, computer lab and residence halls). It is poor at providing easy access to the necessary infrastructures related to library and computer labs. Ease of access to the Internet, adequacy of computer labs,

suitability of computer labs opening hours, available printing facilities in the labs and the libraries, suitability of library working spaces, and training in the use of computers should be improved. The upgrading of computing resources for graduate students is badly needed. The key areas are improvements in computing hardware/software at the institutional level, faster on-line connections, and longer on-line time.

7. Designing an early monitoring and alert system that routinely identifies students who are experiencing some type of difficulty and providing ongoing quality service training for all front-line support staff would also contribute to the positive educational experiences of graduates.
8. The University staffs must be made aware that every point of contact students have matters to their level of satisfaction so that they can exert their level best to enhance students' satisfaction.
9. Where applicable, the student satisfaction survey in conjunction with the University's Strategic Plan should be used to guide planning efforts at the unit level.
10. The University seeks to identify specific areas where university resources might be redirected in order to bring about new desirable changes and sustain continued improvement in student satisfaction.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Reward!

Get direct reward (6 GB Flash/Br 500) and indirect reward (i.e. help your university improve its service by just filing this questionnaire)

Addis Ababa University

Faculty of Education

Department of Business Education

Marketing Management Education Masters Program

Questionnaire to be filled by Post-graduate Education Students

Dear Student:

I am a post graduate Marketing Management Education Student. I'm interested to know your level of satisfaction with your University (AAU) in general and your campus in particular. I would appreciate if you spare some minutes in completing this questionnaire.

You are part of a sample of post-graduate students careful selected to share feedback about university experiences thus far. Your thoughtful and honest responses will give your University leadership about the aspects of the University that are important to you as well as how satisfied you are with them.

Thank you for your Cooperation!

Each item within the box below (page 2-4) describes an expectation about your experiences at this University or your specific campus. On the left indicate how IMPORTANT it is for your University to meet this expectation. On the right, indicate how SATISFIED you are that the University had met this expectation. Please use a tick mark (✓) to indicate your response.

Importance to me . . .

. . . My level of satisfaction

Not important at all Unimportant Neutral 4 - Important 5 - Very important					Very Satisfied - 5 Satisfied - 4 Neutral - 3 Dissatisfied - 2 Very dissatisfied - 1				
Section 1: Campus Environment									
					1. The campus are caring and helpful				
					2. The amount of parking space on campus is adequate				
					3. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus				
					4. The campus provides enough space for students to relax on campus				
					5. The price of food available at cafeterias is economical for students				
					6. There is diverse selection of food available in the cafeteria				
					7. The campus you are in is a safe place after dark				
					8. Your car is secured in campus				
2	3	4	5		Section 2: Registration Effectiveness	1	2	3	4 5
					1. Admission policy is clear				
					2. Admissions staff are knowledgeable				
					3. The personnel involved in registration are helpful				
					4. Registration takes place at the right time				
					5. Promptness of registration				
2	3	4	5		Section 3: Academics (a=1-12 and b=13-20=advising)	1	2	3	4 5
					1. Courses are academically challenging /demanding				
					2. Variety of courses offered are adequate				
					3. The course prepares me for employment				
					4. The course outlines are relevant				
					5. Clarity of information about assessment criteria				
					6. Students' work assessment is fair				
					7. Most assignments required me to critically reflect on previous knowledge and new material				
					8. My instructors provide me with prompt feedback about my work				
					9. The program I joined is a positive professional development experience				
					10. Tuitions paid is a worthwhile investment				
					11. There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus				
					12. The University has a good reputation within the community				
					13. My academic advisor is available during consultation hour				
					14. My advisor is available when I need him/her				
					15. My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual				

Importance to me . . .

. . . My level of satisfaction

Importance to me . . .					. . . My level of satisfaction				
- Not important at all					Very satisfied - 5				
2 - Unimportant					Satisfied- 4				
3 - Neutral					Neutral - 3				
4 - Important					Dissatisfied - 2				
5 - Very important					Very dissatisfied - 1				
2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
				16. My academic advisor has the skill and subject knowledge to adequately support my research					
				17. My academic advisor makes a real effort to understand any difficulties I face					
				18. I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my thesis supervisor /advisor					
				19. I have received good guidance in my related literature search from my advisor					
				20. My advisor provides helpful feedback on my research progress					
2	3	4	5	Section 4: Faculty/Staff	1	2	3	4	5
				1. Administrators are approachable to students					
				2. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students					
				3. Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a program					
				4. Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field					
				5. Teaching staff treat students as mature individuals					
2	3	4	5	Section 5: Infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
				1. Library staff are helpful and approachable					
				2. Library facilities are adequate					
				3. Library opening hours is adequate					
				4. There exists quality printing facility in the library					
				5. I can get a suitable working space in the library					
				6. Library books are helpful					
				7. The library's collection for my program of study is helpful					
				8. The library environment (noise, heating, ambience) is conducive					
				9. Waiting time to get library service is reasonable					
				10. Copy machines availability is adequate					
				11. Electronic resources like journals, news letters etc are available					
				12. I have adequate access to the equipment necessary for my research					
				13. Training in the use of computers					
				14. Availability of printing in the computer lab					
				15. Availability of audio visual aids					
				16. Opening hours of computer lab rooms is suitable					
				17. There is sufficient number of computers for students					
				18. Access to the Internet service is easy					
				19. The computer labs are adequate and accessible					

importance to me . . .

. . . My level of satisfaction

- Not important at all					Very satisfied - 5				
2 - Unimportant					Satisfied- 4				
3 - Neutral					Neutral - 3				
4 - Important					Dissatisfied - 2				
5 - Very important					Very dissatisfied - 1				
Section 6: Skill development/student partial University Experience									
					1. As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project				
					2. My experience so far has improved my analytical skills				
					3. My experience so far had helped me to develop a range of communication skills				
					4. As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently				
					5. I am able to experience intellectual growth here				
					6. My department provides me opportunities for social contact with other research students				
					7. My department provides opportunity for me to become involved in the broader research culture				
					8. My department provides a good seminar program for research students				
					9. The University helped me to work cooperatively in a group				
Section 7: Enrolment Factors									
How IMPORTANT was each of the following factors on your decision to enroll here?									
2	3	4	5						
					1. Cost				
					2. Financial aid (for research and / or other purposes				
					3. Academic reputation				
					4. Size of the University				
					5. Your sponsor's preference				
					6. Recommendations from family / friends etc				
					7. Campus appearance				
					8. The University's Advertisements				
					9. Greater opportunity for part time work in Addis Ababa				

importance to me ...

... My level of satisfaction

1 - Not important at all					Very satisfied - 5									
2 - Unimportant					Satisfied - 4									
3 - Neutral					Neutral - 3									
4 - Important					Dissatisfied - 2									
5 - Very important					Very dissatisfied - 1									
Section 6: Skill development/student partial University Experience														
					1.	As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project								
					2.	My experience so far has improved my analytical skills								
					3.	My experience so far had helped me to develop a range of communication skills								
					4.	As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently								
					5.	I am able to experience intellectual growth here								
					6.	My department provides me opportunities for social contact with other research students								
					7.	My department provides opportunity for me to become involved in the broader research culture								
					8.	My department provides a good seminar program for research students								
					9.	The University helped me to work cooperatively in a group								
Section 7: Enrolment Factors														
How IMPORTANT was each of the following factors on your decision to enroll here?														
1	2	3	4	5										
					1.	Cost								
					2.	Financial aid (for research and / or other purposes								
					3.	Academic reputation								
					4.	Size of the University								
					5.	Your sponsor's preference								
					6.	Recommendations from family / friends etc								
					7.	Campus appearance								
					8.	The University's Advertisements								
					9.	Greater opportunity for part time work in Addis Ababa								

Section 8: General

Choose the one response that best applies to you and put a tick mark (✓) in the corresponding box for each of the following questions:

1. Is there any readily available channel of expressing complaints in the university?

☐ a. Yes

☐ b. No

☐ c. Don't know
2. Have you ever expressed any complaints to concerned party?

☐ a. Yes

☐ b. No
3. If Yes to Q. No. 2 above, how were you satisfied with the response you received for the complaints you made?

☐ a. Very Satisfissed

☐ d. Dissatisfied

☐ b. Satisfied

☐ e. Very dissatisfied

☐ c. Neutral
4. All in all, if you had to do all over again, would you enroll here?

☐ a. Definitely not

☐ d. May be yes

☐ b. May be not

☐ e. Definitely yes

☐ c. I don't know
5. Would you recommend AAU to others?

☐ a. Yes

☐ b. No

☐ c. Don't know
6. In general, how satisfied are you with your overall graduate experience at AAU / in your specific campus?

☐ a. Very Satisfied

☐ d. Dissatisfied

☐ b. Satisfied

☐ e. Very Dissatisfied

☐ c. Neutral

Your comments regarding the University’s strengths and weaknesses, please.....

Strengths

Weaknesses

What changes do you suggest to improve the graduates' learning experience at AAU for others?

Section 9: Demographics

2. Age: (in years)
- ☐ a. 25 – 30
 - ☐ b. 31 – 36
 - ☐ c. 37 – 42
 - ☐ d. > 45 years old
3. Sex : ☐ a. Male ☐ b. Female
4. Your discipline (name of your department) : _____

If you would like to enter the free prize draw for a flash disk (6GB) or cash equivalent (Br 500), please enter your student ID No in the box below. The ID No is only used in the draw; it is not associated with your answers.

Closing date for questionnaire and prize draw is 28/02/10. The draw will take place room number 5 in Business Education Department at 8 PM.

Thank you once Again for taking part in filling this questionnaire

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Checklist

1. Is there any student feedback assessment or graduate student satisfaction survey that was ever made at this University?
2. Is there any well done system / mechanism of handling student complaints? If yes, how does the university receive and respond to students' concerns or how in general the system works?
3. Do you believe that graduate students are satisfied with their educational experiences at AAU?

Appendix C

An Institutional summary that provides complete comparison between level of individual item's importance and their corresponding satisfaction scores

<i>N^o</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
1	Library facilities are adequate	4.94	2.24	2.70
2	Access to the Internet service is easy	4.94	2.20	2.74
3	The computer labs are adequate and accessible	4.93	2.01	2.92
4	My experience so far had helped me to develop a range of communication skills	4.93	3.48	1.45
5	Library Staff are helpful and approachable	4.92	3.34	1.58
6	My department provides opportunity for social contact with other research students	4.92	2.30	2.62
7	Opening hours of computer lab rooms is suitable	4.91	2.96	1.95
8	Library opening hours is adequate	4.91	3.63	1.28
9	As a result of my experience so far I have improved my ability to learn independently	4.91	3.60	1.31
10	My academic advisor make a real effort to understand any difficulties I face	4.90	2.40	2.50
11	My academic advisor has the skill and subject knowledge to adequately support my research	4.89	3.41	1.48
12	I have been given good guidance in topic selection and refinement by my advisor	4.88	3.12	1.76
13	Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students	4.87	2.56	2.31
14	My advisor provides helpful feedback on my research progress	4.86	3.18	1.68
15	Availability of audio visual aids	4.86	1.72	3.14
16	Copy machines availability is adequate	4.85	1.84	3.01

Table Continued

<i>N₀</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
17	My academic advisor is available when I need him/her	4.84	2.86	1.98
18	There is sufficient number of computers for students	4.83	1.86	2.97
19	Teaching staff treat students as mature individuals	4.83	2.43	2.40
20	My academic advisor is available during consultation hour	4.83	2.9	1.93
21	I have been given good guidance in my related literature search by my advisor	4.83	3.20	1.63
22	The University helped me to work cooperatively in a group	4.83	2.90	1.93
23	I have adequate access to the equipments necessary for my research	4.83	2.40	2.43
24	Library books are helpful	4.83	2.91	1.92
25	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus	4.82	2.40	2.42
26	My experience so far has improved my analytical skills	4.81	2.89	1.92
27	Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their field	4.80	3.03	1.77
28	My department provides a good seminar program for research students	4.80	2.71	2.09
29	The University has a good reputation within the community	4.79	3.42	1.37
30	My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual	4.78	3.39	1.39
31	Students' work assessment is fair	4.78	2.24	2.54
32	Electronic resources like journals, news letters, etc are available	4.77	2.28	2.49
33	The program I joined is a positive professional development experience	4.76	3.59	1.17
34	Availability of printing in the computer lab	4.75	1.89	2.86
35	Faculty provide timely feedback about students progress in a program	4.75	3.03	1.72
36	I am able to experience intellectual growth here	4.74	3.03	1.71

Table Continued

<i>N₀</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
37	Libraries collection for my program of study is helpful	4.72	3.45	1.27
38	The personnel involved in registration are helpful	4.72	1.94	2.78
39	Most assignments required me to critically reflect on previous knowledge and new material	4.71	3.19	1.52
40	Courses are academically challenging/demanding	4.69	3.34	1.35
41	Training in the use of computers	4.69	1.73	2.94
42	Administrators are approachable to students	4.69	2.09	2.60
43	My instructors provide me with prompt feedback about my work	4.69	2.44	2.25
44	Clarity of information about assessment criteria	4.69	2.5	2.19
45	Variety of courses offered are adequate	4.68	3.20	1.48
46	There exists Quality printing facilities in the library	4.65	2.35	2.30
47	Registration takes place at the right time	4.65	2.54	2.11
48	My department provides me to become involved in the broader research culture	4.62	2.12	2.50
49	As a result of my experience so far I feel confident about managing a research project	4.61	2.70	1.91
50	Promptness of registration	4.6	2.58	2.02
51	The libraries environment (noise, heating, ambience) is conducive	4.57	3.10	1.47
52	The campus you are in is a safe place after dark	4.54	2.75	1.79
53	The course outlines are relevant	4.52	3.52	1.00
54	The courses prepared me for employment	4.48	2.83	1.65
55	Waiting time to get library service is reasonable	4.46	3.33	1.13
56	I can get a suitable working space in the library	4.44	2.42	2.02
57	admission policy is clear	4.43	2.63	1.80

Table Continued

<i>N₀</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Imp Mean</i>	<i>Sat Mean</i>	<i>Gap Mean</i>
58	The price of food available at cafeterias is economical for students	4.39	3.08	1.31
59	There is diverse selection of food available in the cafeteria	4.33	2.50	1.83
60	the campus provides enough space for students to relax on campus	4.29	2.98	1.31
61	Tuitions paid is a worthwhile investment	4.27	2.39	1.88
62	admission staff are knowledgeable	4.23	3.03	1.20
63	The campus are caring and helpful	4.19	2.66	1.53
64	your car is secured on campus	3.88	2.85	1.03
65	It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus	3.73	2.94	0.79
66	The amount of parking space on campus is adequate	3.44	3.18	0.26

Appendix D

1. Eastern Oregon University
2. University of Michigan-Flint
3. Canterbury Christ Church University College
4. University of Central England
5. University of Central Florida
6. University of South Australia (UniSA)
7. Wyoming University
8. Mesa College
9. University of Kentucky
10. Ohio State University
11. University of North Texas
12. University of Maryland Baltimore County
13. University of Salford
14. Southern Utah University
15. Lund University
16. Florida Community College
17. University of North Dakota
18. Fayetteville State University
19. Oklahoma State University
20. Florida Atlantic University
21. California Institute of Integrated Studies
22. Lander University
23. University of Bristol
24. DeVry University
25. The University of Warwick
26. National University of Ireland, Galway

Total Number of MA students

Appendix E

NO	Department	Program	Year One 2009/10	Year Two	Extension	Summer	Total
1	Business Education	Vocational Education Management	13	26		28	67
		Marketing Management ✓	34	26		35	95
2	Curriculum & Teachers Professional Development Studies	Curriculum & Instruction	40	29		60	129
		Adult & Lifelong Education	18	25			43
3	Educational Planning and Management	Human Resource & Organizational Development	31	26			57
		Educational Leadership & Management	34**	25			59
		Educational Policy & Planning	32	17			49
4	Psychology	Counseling	29	23			52
		Developmental	27	23			50
		Social	29	26			55
		Measurement and Evaluation	26	17			43
5	Ethiopian Language and Literature	Multilingual & Multicultural Education	34	14	35	32	115
		Oromo Language & Literature	25	27			52
		Applied Linguistics for Teaching Amharic	48				48
6	English Language Education	Teaching English as a Foreign Language	159	63	37	54	313
7	Geography And Environmental Education	Geography And Environmental Education ✓	30	25			55
8	Physical Education	Physical Education	60	52			112
9	Mathematics Education	Mathematics Education	30	19		45	94
10	Physics Education	Physics Education	38	29		25	92
11	Special Needs Education	Special Needs Education	20	23			43
12	IER	IER		19			
Total			757	534	72	279	1,642

+51p