The Effect of Perceived Congruence of Communication on Service Quality of Customer-Contact Subordinates: Mediating the Role of Self-Perceived Performance

Mehmet Ferhat Özbek, Davran Yuldashev

ABSTRACT

In this study, we attempt to explain the results found in the relationships between perceived congruence of communication, self-perceived performance and service quality. Specifically, we propose that the relationship between perceived congruence of communication and service quality is mediated by a self-perceived performance. The data was collected from 186 customer-contact subordinates in hotels, banks and restaurants in Kyrgyzstan. To test the direct and mediated effect, structural equation modeling techniques were applied. We found that self-perceived performance mediates the relationship between the perceived congruence of communication and service quality.

Mehmet Ferhat Özbek (✉), corresponding author
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Gümüşhane University
ferhatozbek@gmail.com
Davran Yuldashev
Faculty of Management, University of Economy and Enterprise, Kyrgyzstan
e-mail: davronline@hotmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today, intensifying competition and rapid deregulation have led many service businesses to seek profitable ways to differentiate themselves (Parasuraman et al. 1988). During this period, businesses have attempted to improve the quality of service for sales advantage. To improve service quality, businesses must listen to what customers want and then commit resources to deliver precisely (Kotler et al. 1999). If service firms fail to deliver acceptable service quality, they will quickly lose customers to competitors (Kotler et al. 1999). Therefore, delivering quality service is an essential strategy for the success of a company (Zeithalm et al. 1996). In addition, interaction between a customer and an employee is an important determinant of service quality. Service quality cannot be considered separately from the service provider (Lewis 1989). As service providers customer-contact employees are responsible for service quality, customer satisfaction, and the overall performance of the company (Hartline & Ferrell 1996).

The purpose of this study was to research perceptual congruence between superiors and subordinates in terms of communication variables and to relate it to important organizational outcomes such as a subordinate's self-perceived performance and service quality in Kyrgyzstan. The service sector is the largest part of the Kyrgyz gross domestic product (Report of Turkey's Foreign Trade Undersecretary 2009). Therefore, the service sector is vital for Kyrgyz economy. In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan gained independence. With the acquisition of independence, Kyrgyzstan has started its transition to a free market economy. But there are many transition challenges in Kyrgyzstan. For example, corruption and poverty are large obstacles for this country's development (Koichumanov et al. 2005).

There are few prior studies on the relationship of customer-contact employees' performance and service quality. For instance, Johlke & Duhan (2000) found that good communication practices were directly related to improved service employees' job performance. Mukherjee & Malhotra (2006) found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and customer-contact employees' service quality. Boshoff & Mels (1995) and Boshoff & Tait (1996) found a positive relationship between organizational commitment and service quality. Bhanthumnavin (2003), Shanock & Eisenberger (2006), and DeConinck &

Johnson (2009) found that supervisory support was positively related to subordinate performance. In addition to these findings, Bettencourt & Brown (1997) and Kim et al. (2009) found that fairness and job satisfaction have a significant effect on customer-contact employee's extra-role service behaviors.

Despite some studies on improving service quality of customer-contact subordinates, there was no clear explication of how perceived congruence of communication affects service quality. In addition, we were unable to find any studies that researched the mediating role of a subordinate's self perceived performance in the relationship between perceived congruence of communication and service quality. This study attempts to fill this gap by presenting evidence on these relationships.

2. LITERATURE

2.1 Service Quality

Service quality is a highly abstract, indistinct and elusive construct (Parasuraman et al. 1985; Parasuraman et al. 1988; Palmer 2003). Parasuraman et al. (1988) described service quality as "a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service". Service quality depends on the quality of buyer-seller communication (Kotler et al. 1999). It can be said that service quality is the result of human communication between a service provider and a customer (Malhotra & Mukherjee 2004).

Service quality is the basic issue facing the service sector (Chen et al. 1994). Successful service firms focus their attention on both their employees and customers. If the service delivery systems are effective, and the workers feel confident about their own abilities to operate within the service delivery system, then they are likely to show high levels of capacity to satisfy customers (Sergeant & Frenkel 2000). Service firms understand the service-profit chain, which links a service firms' profits with employee and customer satisfaction (Kotler et al. 1999).

Service quality is a multidimensional construct (Schneider & White 2004). Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed ten dimensions of service quality, such as reliability, access, understanding of the customer, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, communication, credibility,

security, and tangible considerations. Later, Parasuraman et al. (1998) reduced the number of service quality's dimensions from ten to five, which were reliability, tangibles, responseveness, assurance and empathy. They developed service quality measure on the basis of these five dimensions. The most popular measure of service quality is the one developed by Parasuraman, Zeithalm and Berry (Brown et al. 1993).

2.2 Perceived Congruence of Communication

Superior-subordinate communication in the workplace strongly affects who says what to whom, and with what effect (McElreath 2006). For most subordinates, their supervisors are structurally the most important relation links in the workplace. This relationship between subordinate and supervisor can be analyzed in terms of three elements (Downs & Adrian 2004). First, interpersonal trust influences the quality, level, content, and directionality of communication. Second, superior-subordinate relationships largely determine message exchange, especially for upward communication. For example, when employees do not perceive supervisors as being open, employees limit the number of messages they send upward. Third, the communication style of the supervisor affects his or her relationship with employees.

The congruence studies started with Katz and Kahn's (1978) role episode model. According to this model, the superior is a role sender and the subordinate is a role receiver. The first congruence research tested the correspondence of sender and receiver role expectations. Wexley et al. (1980) found that perceptual congruence was a significant predictor of employee satisfaction and performance. Hatfield & Huseman (1982) investigated the role of perceived congruence of communication in the supervisor and subordinate relationship. According to their findings, the perceived congruence of communication between supervisor and subordinate had a positive effect on job satisfaction. White et al. (1985) found positive relationships between perceptual congruence and subordinate communication satisfaction. These congruence studies explained the role of the perceived congruence of communication on some organizational outcomes. But, we can not find any study that explains the role of perceived congruence of communication on two important organizational outcomes: performance and service quality.

2.3 Self-Perceived Performance

Self-perceived performance means an employee's evaluating his/her own performance, comparing that performance with others, and having confidence in his/her job (Castaneda 1999). Self-perceived performance is a part of self-management as a new economic paradigm for the information age (Castaneda et al. 1999). Self-management is also an important determinant of successful organizations (Castaneda et al. 1999), and it provides an important standpoint for understanding employee behaviors (Erez & Kanfer 1983, Sullivan 1989, Tsui & Ashford 1994). Self-management perceptions and practices developed by Brief & Aldag (1981) and revised by Castaneda et al. (1999) contribute to a more complete understanding of different employee behaviors. Employees in an organization are generally taught how to manage subordinates, but they rarely receive instruction on how to manage themselves. This gap situation leads to the emergence of self-management strategies (Castaneda et al. 1999). Recent organizational developments, such as an increased level of empowerment, home-based work, self-managed work teams, growth in service employment, and changing work demands have increased the importance of self-management (Castaneda et al. 1999).

A measurement for self-management practices has been developed by Castaneda and colleagues (1999), and self-perceived performance is an important part of this construct. Other parts of self management are self efficacy, knowledge of personal performance, and feedback from supervisors. As suggested by Castaneda et al. (1999), the external generalizability of self-management perceptions and practices needs further study, and their research was only the first step. In addition, causal linkages between self-management perceptions & practices and personal & organizational outcomes should be investigated by researchers (Castaneda et al. 1999).

3. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

We developed hypotheses using Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), also known as Vertical Dyad Linkage theory. LMX theory has been widely accepted, applied, and supported, in research across different areas, especially in organizational behavior (Schriesheim et al. 1999). According to LMX theory, supervisors differentiate members of their work unit into in-groups and out-groups (Dansereau et al. 1975; Graen & Scandura 1987). Supervisor beha-

vior toward in-group subordinates is characterized by high trust, greater support, frequent interaction, and more rewards, while supervisor behavior toward out-group subordinates is characterized by low trust, less support, infrequent interaction, and fewer rewards (Wilhelm et al. 1993). In addition, supervisors give more credit to in-group members for their effective performance but more blame to out-group members for their inadequate performance (Heneman et al. 1989). Previous studies have shown that LMX has been found to be positively related to important organizational outcomes, such as role clarity (Blau 1988), performance evaluations (Turban et al. 1990; Wayne & Ferris 1990), subordinate performance (Dunegan et al. 1992) job satisfaction (Wayne & Ferris, 1990), job performance, organizational citizenship behavior (Wayne et al. 1997; Greguras & Ford 2006), and organizational commitment (Knicki & Vecchio 1994), and negatively related to turnover (Graen & Scandura 1987). LMX also mediates the relationships between interactional justice and performance & organizational citizenship behaviors (Burton et al. 2008).

According to LMX theory, the relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate affects the subordinate's job performance and satisfaction (Graen 2005). In other words, if the superior can communicate honestly with his/her subordinate and support the subordinate's actions and confidence, the subordinate will reciprocate with more time and energy, greater responsibility, and commitment to the success of the entire unit or organization (Dansereau et al. 1975). In addition, if a supervisor has a high-quality dyadic relationship with his/her subordinate, the leader should be more aware of the job problems (Graen & Schiemann 1978), so supervisors can solve the subordinate's problems. This situation affects subordinate performance positively.

We argue that the perceived congruence of communication between supervisor and subordinate positively affects the subordinate's self-perceived performance and service quality in this study. If supervisors don't pay attention to congruence of communication with subordinates, subordinate service performance decreases. Weak congruence of communication between supervisors and subordinates can also lead to misunderstandings. This situation negatively affects subordinate performance. If adequate communications are provided between supervisors and subordinates, the subordinate's self-perceived performance and service quality will improve. Thus, perceived congruence of communication is a significant predictor

of a subordinate's self-perceived performance. In summary, the present study tested the following hypotheses:

H1: Perceived congruence of communication is positively related to self-perceived performance.

H2: Perceived congruence of communication is positively related to service quality.

Zeithaml et al. (1990) argued that service quality decreases when employees are unable to perform a service at the level needed. According to this argument, performance is a significant predictor of service quality by customer-contact subordinates; thus we can claim that high self-perceived performance leads to high service quality. Therefore, the following hypothesis was tested:

H3: Self-perceived performance is positively related to service quality.

We also argue that self-perceived performance mediates the relationship between percei-ved congruence of communication and service quality. On the basis of *H1*, we further propose self-perceived performance as an important mediator of the relationship between perceived congruence of communication and service quality. According to our argument, if a subordinate perceives congruence of communication, he/she will feel comfortable and subordinate performance will improve. As a result of this statement, service quality of customer-contact subordinates will improve. Thus, the following hypothesis was tested:

H4: Self-perceived performance mediates the positive relationship between perceived congruence of communication and service quality.

4. METHOD

The basic and mediator model is shown in Figure 1, where the variables of perceived congruence of communication, self-perceived performance, and service quality are linked by arrows representing relations among variables. There is a direct effect of perceived con-

gruence of communication on service quality (see Basic Model) and a mediated effect by which perceived congruence of communication indirectly affects service quality through self-perceived performance (see Mediating Model).
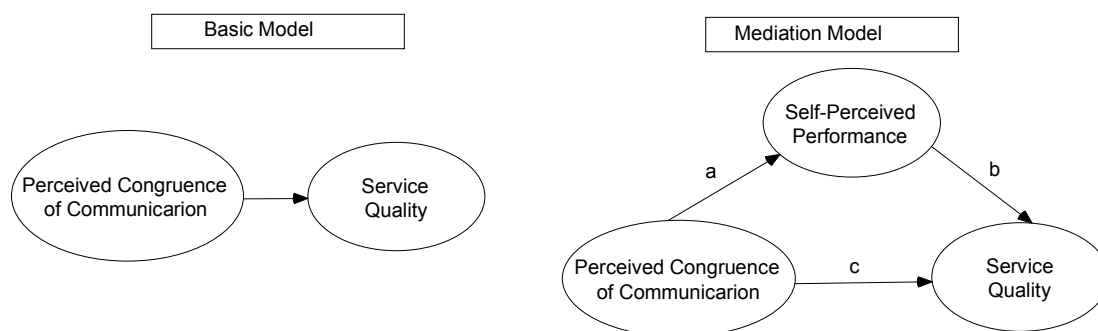

Figure 1. Basic and Mediation Model

The purposes of this study were to investigate perceptual congruence between superiors and subordinates in terms of specific communication variables and to relate congruence to important organizational outcomes, i.e. service quality perceptions of customer-contact subordinates and the mediating effect of self-perceived performance. To test mediating effect, we used Baron & Kenny's (1986) mediator variable model method. Their mediating model assumes a three-variable system such that there are two causal paths feeding into the dependent variable: the direct impact of the independent variable (Path c) and the impact of the mediator (Path b). There is also a path from the independent variable to the mediator (Path a). Baron & Kenny (1986) argued that a variable functions as a mediator when it meets these conditions:

a)   variations in levels of the independent variable significantly account for variations in the presumed mediator (*perceived congruence of communication → self-perceived performance*) (i.e., Path a),

b)   variations in the mediator significantly account for variations in the dependent variable *(self-perceived performance → service quality)* (i.e. Path b)

c)   when Paths a and b are controlled, a previously significant relation between the independent and dependent variables (*perceived congruence of communication →*

service quality) is no longer significant, with the strongest demonstration of mediation occurring when Path c is zero (See Figure 1).

5. SAMPLE

The sample for the present research consisted of customer-contact service subordinates from hotels, banks and restaurants in Kyrgyzstan. Specifically, 300 questionnaires were sent to organizations. A total of 186 respondents returned their completed questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 62%. Overall, only 186 questionnaires were usable for the structural equation analysis. Altogether, 51.5% of the participants were female, and 61.5% were in the 17-30 years of age range. About 56% have one to five years of work experience, about 20% have 6 to 15 years, and about 24% have more than 15 years.

6. MEASUREMENTS

Perceived congruence of communication was measured by a 14-item instrument based on Hatfield & Huseman's (1982) typology of superior-subordinate communication. Respondents indicated, on a five-point scale, how frequently each of the 14 communication behaviors occurred during superior-subordinate interactions.

Self-perceived performance was measured by an 8-item instrument based on Castaneda et al. (1999) typology of self-management practices scale. The 8-item measure asked respondents to indicate how often they engaged in each of the specific self-management behaviors using scale anchors of 1 (never do this) to 5 (always do this).

In service quality, it is generally accepted that service delivery occurs through human interaction (Boshoff & Mels 1995). According to Sergeant & Frenkel (2000), customer-contact employees are well placed to judge effectively the quality of the services that they deliver. Services are delivered by service employees for customers. Customer-contact employees can understand and respond to customer needs and expectations (Zeithalm et al. 1988). So, we can assume that a customer-contact service employees' evaluation of his/her service performance is an important indicator of service quality. In support of this assumeption, Boshoff & Mels (1995) claimed that self rating is valid and correlates highly with other measures of performance. In this study, customer-contact subordinates evaluated their own

performance in terms of service quality.

Service quality was measured by an 11-item instrument based on Malhotra & Mukherjee's study (2004) on a shortened (11-items) and adapted version of the Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) service quality instrument. Malhotra & Mukherjee's (2004) deleted the "tangibles" dimension from the service quality scale, because this dimension did not play any role in measuring the service quality of customer-contact employees. Malhotra & Mukherjee's (2004) study selected only items that pertained specifically to employee-related aspects of service quality. They selected appropriate items from the other four dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) of service quality. We used only those items that pertained specifically to employee-related aspects of service quality. The measure are five-point Likert-type scales where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree.

7. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Before testing the hypotheses, factor analyses (principle components, varimax rotation) and reliability analyses were conducted on the perceived congruence of communication, self-perceived performance and service quality items used in the survey for this research. After the factor, validity and reliability analyses, the hypotheses were tested using the structural equation model presented in Figure 1. These models consists of an independent (exogenous) variable of perceived congruence of communication, self-perceived performance as a mediating variable, and service quality which is considered a dependent (endogenous) variable. The proposed model was tested using covariance structure analysis. SPSS 16 was used for the factor and reliability analysis (measurement model) and The Analysis of Moment Structures 16 (AMOS 16) was used for the regression analysis (structural model).

As a test of the measurement and the structural models, a mixture of fit-indices was employed to assess model fit. The ratio of x^2 (absolute fit indices) to degrees of freedom (x^2/df) has been computed, with ratios of less than 2.0 indicating a good fit (Carmines & McIver 1981). Other fit indices, such as the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), are computed to provide a more robust evaluation of a model fit. For GFI, AGFI, CFI, and NFI,

coefficients closer to 1.00 indicate a perfect fit, with acceptable levels of fit being above 0.90 (Hu & Bentler 1998; Hu & Bentler 1999). For Root Mean square Residual (RMR) and Root Mean square Error Approximation (RMSEA), evidence of a good fit is considered to be values less than 0.05; values from 0.05 to 0.10 are indicative of moderate fit and values greater than 0.10 are taken to be evidence of a poorly fitting model (Browne & Cudeck 1993, Schumacker & Lomax 2004).

7.1 Factor and Reliability Analyses Results

Perceived congruence of communication: The result of exploratory factor analysis with principal components method and varimax rotation has shown that the identifiable two factors. Although *perceived congruence of communication* was linked to three factors in literature (coordination, participation and exploration), in our sample, we have found two factors (coordination and participation). This may have occurred due to sample size, selected sample area, and perception of the respondents. We have used the Cronbach's alpha to estimate reliability of all measures. The Cronbach's alphas for these sub-scales of *perceived congruence of communication* are 0.70 and 0.74. Three items of perceived congruence of communication did not load significantly and were deleted from further analysis.

Self-perceived performance: The result of factor analysis has shown that the identifiable one factor. The Cronbach's alpha value of this scale is 0.83.

Service quality: The result of factor analysis has shown that the identifiable one factor. Cronbach's alpha value of this scale is 0.84. According to results, all the Cronbach's alpha values showed a levels above the 0.70 threshold recommended by Nunnally (1967).

7.2 Correlation and Validity Analyses Results

The means, standard deviations, average variance extracted, Cronbach alphas, correlations, and reliabilities between all variables in the study are presented in Table 1. Results of correlations among variables reveal that independent and dependent variables in this study are positively and significantly associated. The strongest correlation is observed between self-perceived performance and service quality (r = 0.51; p ≤ 0.01). For the validity test, we checked whether average variance extracted of a concept is bigger than squares of correlation

coefficients between the concept and the others (Fornell & Larker 1981). Results satisfy for construct validity.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Average Variance Extracted, Intercorrelations and
Reliabilities of Scales

	Mean	Stn.Dev.	AVE	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Coordination	3.60	0.58	0.57	(0.70)			
2. Participation	3.92	0.70	0.80	0.39**	(0.74)		
3. Self-perceived performance	3.46	0.68	0.67	0.37**	0.17*	(0.83)	
4. Service quality	4.05	0.54	0.62	0.38**	0.50**	0.51**	(0.84)

Notes: n = 186; Five-point Likert scale was used for all variables. The Cronbach alpha values of the scales are
shown in parentheses on the diagonal of the correlation matrix.
** $p < 0.01$ level, * $p < 0.05$ level, AVE: Average variance extracted.

7.3 Structural Analysis Results

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to examine the hypothesized relationships between perceived congruence of communication, self-perceived performance, and service quality. In structural equation modeling, a combination of confirmatory factor analysis and multiple regressions is used to determine relations between constructs. SEM provides a means to efficiently evaluate the hypothesized relations among multiple constructs within the context of a multivariable model (Byrne 2010).

Concerning the factor analytic properties of structural equation modeling, constructs (identified "latent" variables in structural equation modeling) are estimated by a factor analysis of data from theoretically related measures (identified as "observed" or "indicator" variables). To assess the direct and indirect relationships between perceived congruence of coordination, participation, self-perceived performance, and service quality, this study followed a two-step procedure using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

Basic model results (Model 1): Covariance structure analysis was performed to test the structural model. The overall fit of the model was determined by examining the chi-square statistic, fit indexes, and the root mean square residual. The chi-square is not significant for the model and the ratios of less than 2.0 indicating a good fit (x^2(19.51)/df(20) = 0.98, p =

0,49) for the model and the overall fit indexes exceed the 0.90 threshold commonly recommended for adequate fit; GFI = 0.976, AGFI = 0.946, CFI = 1.000, NFI = 0.967, RMR = 0.020 and RMSEA = 0.000, which is below the commonly recommended level of 0.05 (Browne & Cudeck 1993; Schumacker & Lomax 2004; Hu & Bentler 1998; Hu & Bentler 1999).
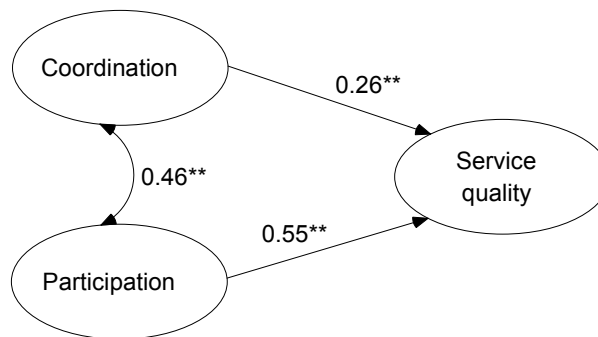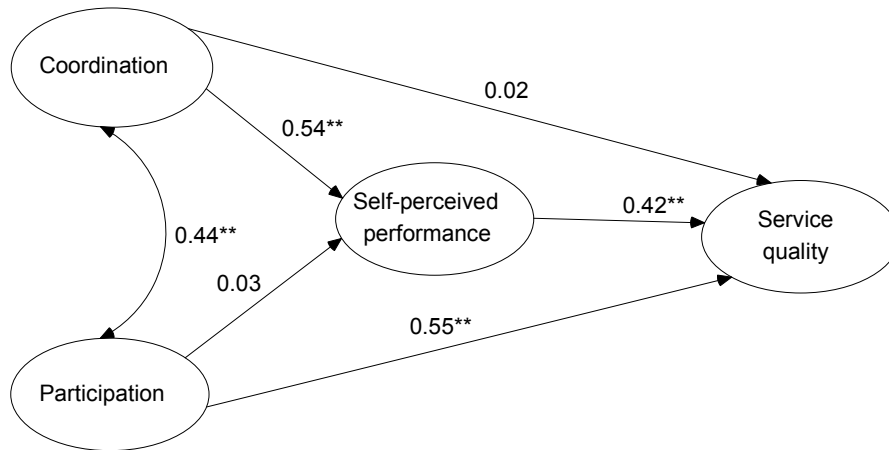

Note: [**] p < 0.01 and [*] p < 0.05.

Figure 2. Structural Results of Basic Model

The standardized estimates for the model paths are used to test the basic model. These estimates are provided in Figure 2. The model result shows that dimensions of coordination (Estimate = 0.26[**]) and participation (Estimate = 0.55[**]) in perceived congruence of communication positively affect service quality of customer-contact subordinates. According to this result, *H1* is accepted.

Mediation model results (Model 2): Covariance structure analysis was performed to test the mediation model. The overall fit of the model was determined by examining the chi-square statistic, fit indexes, and the root mean square residual. The chi-square is not significant for the model and the ratios of less than 2.0 indicating a good fit (x^2(48.73)/df(42) = 1.16, p = 0.22) for the model and the overall fit indexes exceed the 0.90 threshold commonly recommended for adequate fit; GFI = 956, AGFI = 0.918, CFI = 0.992, NFI = 0.948, RMR = 0.026 and RMSEA = 0.029, which is below the commonly recommended level of 0.05 (Browne & Cudeck 1993; Schumacker & Lomax 2004; Hu & Bentler 1998; Hu & Bentler 1999).

Note: ** p < 0.01.

Figure 3. Structural Results of Mediated Model

The standardized estimates for the model paths are used to test the mediation model. These estimates are provided in Figure 3. The model result shows that the dimension of coordination in perceived congruence of communication positively affects self-perceived performance of customer-contact employees (Estimate = 0.54**). But, the dimension of participation in perceived congruence of communication doesn't affect self-perceived performance of customer-contact employees (Estimate = 0.03). Thus, *H2* was partially supported. Results show that self perceived performance is positively related to service quality of customer-contact employees (Estimate = 0.42**). Thus, *H3* was supported.

Table 2. Mediation Model Results

Bivariate Relationship		Coefficients	
Exogenous variable	*Endogenous variable*	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect
Coordination	→ Self-Perceived Performance	0.54**	-
Participation	→ Self-Perceived Performance	0.03	-
Self-Perceived Performance	→ Service Quality	0.42**	-
Coordination	→ Service Quality	0.02	0.23**
Participation	→ Service Quality	0.55**	0.01

Note: * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01.

Results also show that the dimension of participation in perceived congruence of communication positively and directly affects service quality (Estimate = 0.55^{**}). There is no indirect effect of dimension of participation in perceived congruence of communication on service quality. But, self-perceived performance mediates the relationship between the dimension of coordination in perceived congruence of communication and service quality (Estimate = 0.23^{**}). According to these results, *H4* was partially supported.

Consequently, the results of the *basic model* indicate that the dimension of participation and coordination in perceived congruence of communication have direct effect on service quality. But, mediating model results indicate that the previously significant relation between the dimension of coordination in perceived congruence of communication and service quality (see Model I) is not significant. However, *mediating model* results indicate that dimension of coordination in perceived congruence of communication have indirect (mediated) effect on service quality.

8. DISCUSSION

This study extends previous research by proposing a model of the relationship between perceived congruence of communication and service quality with the mediating role of self-perceived performance. We have used Baron & Kenny's mediation model approach in this study. The initial necessity stipulated by Baron & Kenny for establishing mediation was met as indicated by the support for *Model 1*. The second necessity for establishing mediation was met as indicated by the support for *Model 2*. In addition, all of the variables of interest were significantly correlated in the predicted direction. The third necessity for establishing mediation was examined by including self-perceived performance in the regression equation for each of the dependent variables. The structural results of *Model 2* indicate that self-perceived performance fully mediated the relations between dimension of coordination of perceived congruence of communication and service quality.

This study's results show that perceived congruence of communication improves service quality through subordinate self-perceived performance in the Kyrgyz sample. Therefore, managers must give attention to communication factors of business because the service sector is vital to speed up economic progress, reduce poverty and increase employment for Kyrgyz-

stan.

Today, companies seek to become competitive in order to do better than their trading rivals in the world. Superior service quality provides a competitive advantage for the success of a service firm's strategic objectives (Boshoff & Mels 1995). The result of this study indicates that congruence between supervisor-subordinate relationships increases subordinate performance and improves service quality. Performance is also vital to organizational survival and effectiveness (Swanson 1994). Therefore, supervisors must spend more time with their subordinates to provide congruence of communication with their subordinates. This leads to increased congruence of communication between a supervisor and subordinates, better understanding by managers of employees and their job requirements, a fuller appreciation for work related problems, and improved relations between a supervisor and subordinates (Harris & Nelson 2008).

9. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this study is that although perceived congruence of communication was linked to three factors in the literature (participation, coordination and expression); it was linked to two factors (participation and coordination) in our study. The current study also only focused on subordinate responses from the subordinate's perspectives. To fully understand the reciprocal relationship between superiors and their subordinates, responses of supervisors also need to be investigated. The other limitations of the our study is that it was based on a small sample and relied on self-reported data, thereby allowing for the possibility of some bias (Harris & Schaubroeck 1988; Fox & Dinur 1988; Farh & Dobbins 1989; Conway & Huffcutt 1997).

10. CONCLUSION

A number of researchers have found the effects of perceived congruence of communication on job satisfaction. But little attention has been paid to its effect on subordinate self-perceived performance and service quality. The results of this study show how the dimension of participation in perceived congruence of communication directly affects perception of service quality of customer-contact subordinates, while the dimension of coordination in perceived

congruence of communication only indirectly affects it. Results also show that self-perceived performance was a mediator variable on the relationship between the dimension of coordination in perceived congruence of communication and service quality of customer-contact subordinates.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Appendix: Questionnaire items

Perceived congruence of communication

1. My supervisor asks me for suggestions about how work should be done.
2. I question my supervisor's instructions when I don't understand them.
3. My supervisor informs me about company rules and regulations
4. I question my supervisor's instructions when I think they are wrong
5. My supervisor informs me about company plans for the future.
6. I tell my supervisor when I think things are being done wrong.
7. My supervisor lets me know when I have done a good job.
8. My supervisor lets me know when I have not done a good job.
9. My supervisor explains his/her way of doing work.
10. My supervisor criticizes my work in front of others. r
11. My supervisor tells me why changes are made in work assignment.
12. My supervisor explains his/her way of doing work.
13. My supervisor ridicules or makes fun of me. r
14. My supervisor express sympathy to me when something unfortunate happens in my personal life.

Self perceived performance

1. I have mastered my job.
2. I am certain I can do my job well.
3. I am a high performer
4. My performance on my job is considered to be excellent.
5. I an better at my job than most people in my position
6. I would give myself a high performance rating
7. My performance is better than that of the other people in my work group
8. My overall job performance is excellent

Service quality

1. I can understand the specific needs of my customers.

2. When I promise a customer that I will do something by a certain time, I do so.

3. I perform the service right the first time.

4. When problems occur, I give them all my attention in an effort to solve them speedily.

5. I am never too busy to respond to the requests of my customers.

6. I give prompt service to my customers.

7. I always explain to my customers each and every step I take to answer their questions, e.g. why a call needs to be transferred, etc.

8. I treat all customers courteously.

9. I have the knowledge and ability to answer customers' questions.

10. When a customer has a problem, I provide him/her with individual attention.

11. My behavior instills confidence in my customer.

r: reverse item

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Mehmet Ferhat Özbek completed his PhD in 2006 at Uludag University, Turkey. He is an Assistant Professor in Management at Gümüşhane University, Turkey. His research interests are related to organizational behavior and industrial organizational psychology. Dr Özbek has contributed various articles to academic journals and presented his research work in conferences. He has been working on employee commitment, satisfaction, performance and work ethic.

Davran Yuldashev is a lecturer in the Faculty of Management at Economy and Enterprise University in Kyrgyzstan. He has an M.B.A. Degree from Sakarya University, and he is a PhD. student. His research interests are marketing and management.