



Coherence and Gap Between Service Quality Attributes and Customer Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Service conformance to customer expectations is measured in terms of service quality. In order to enhance their services, spot issues as they arise, and more accurately gauge customer satisfaction, service business owners frequently evaluate the quality of the services they offer to their clients. The link between sustainable product qualities and consumer decision-making has been the subject of significant research advancements in recent decades. Nonetheless, despite the substantial quantity of research, conclusions are still dispersed and occasionally even inconsistent. Because customers' assessments of service quality vary widely, the goal of this study is to demonstrate analytically and empirically how the SERVQUAL dimensions are coherent across service industries and even within the same service industry. Because the five SERVQUAL dimensions do not correspond to a customer's psychometric aspects of service quality, this conclusion suggests that there is a gap and lack of coherence between SERVQUAL's five dimensions and customer satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the factors that determines a company's performance is customer happiness. In addition, a firm can use customer satisfaction as a competitive advantage when dealing with other businesses. In other words, customer satisfaction is their reaction to having their requirements met. This indicates that regardless of whether a need is met to the customer's pleasure or to their expectations, they will be satisfied with the goods or services they have received. It is expected that increasing customer happiness will boost a company's resilience and ability to make a profit. It is doubtful that a business would survive and be able to grow if it can meet the needs of its consumers but cannot make a profit. According to Kotler and Keller (2019), a product's overall qualities and qualities on the capacity to fulfill stated/implicit needs are the product's quality. For industries, products are crucial because without them, they would be unable to do any business at all. Products must be tailored to customers' desires or wants in order for product marketing to be effective since customers will only purchase things they feel are appropriate. In other words, the production of items is more in line with consumer preferences or market demands.

One of the key elements influencing client happiness and purchase decisions is service quality (Kahnali & Esmaeili, 2015). It significantly affects market growth and market share gains. In their assessment of the literature on service quality management, Canciglieri Junior et al. (2019) discovered that "customer satisfaction" is the primary method to quality management in the service industry in more than half of the publications they looked at. The conformity of a customer's experience getting a particular service with his or her prior expectations is typically characterized as the measure of service quality, which strongly corresponds with customer satisfaction (Canciglieri Junior et al., 2019; Parasuraman et al., 1995, 1988). The well-known service quality measurement system "SERVQUAL" is built on this idea. The original SERVQUAL framework recommends that practitioners evaluate service quality using the following five dimensions: (i) Tangible (service provider's physical equipment and facilities, personnel, and communication devices); (ii) Responsiveness (service provider's willingness to help the customers and promptness); (iii) Reliability (service provider's capability to provide reliable, accurate, and punctual services as promised to the customers); (iv) Assurance (service provider's ability to attract customers' trust and confidence in their professional knowledge and mindset); and (v) Empathy (service provider's understanding of customers' needs and difficulties, and the ability to treat them with empathetic attention; Kadłubek & Grabara, 2015; Kahnali & Esmaeili, 2015). Customers are asked to score each dimension's items on a Likert scale based on their expectations and perceptions prior to and following service use.

In the past ten years, SERVQUAL has been used to evaluate the caliber of logistics services in a number of locations, including a pharmaceutical distribution company in Turkey (Ramanathan & Karpuzcu, 2011), a company providing warehousing services in Iran (Kahnali & Esmaeili, 2015), and freight forwarding firms in Serbia (Kilibarda et al., 2016). It is very possible that customers of various logistics services would have varying needs and expectations. Business systems are likely to differ among sectors and nations, and study findings from one area should not be extrapolated to a case of another industry or nation until an empirical validation has been carried out, according to Goyal et al. (2013). This suggests that perhaps the list of items for each SERVQUAL dimension needs to be changed in order to make the items more pertinent to the unique features of a business operations.

A typical transportation service has not yet had SERVQUAL applied to it in any studies. The performance of service quality and areas for development can then be determined by analyzing the coherence and discrepancy between client expectations and perceptions. This study suggests a research model to determine dimension of quality mainly about service quality can affect consumer decision making and also customer satisfaction. The following concerns are attempted to be answered by this research:

1. Does service quality can affect customer satisfaction?
2. Is there any coherence and gap between service quality and customer satisfaction?

The remaining segments of this paper are prepared as follows: the second section goes over the research methodologies, the third section goes over the results, and the final section describes how the study came to its conclusion.

2. METHODS

This article was written using systematic literature review method. Writer conducted the literature review by searching on online journals a particular available on google scholar databases, Emerald, Science Direct, SCOPUS, IEEE, Wiley Online Library etc. In the first place of the analysis, these articles were obtained over defined the year of publication, theory adopted, source journals, etc. This article uses descriptive analysis to create a visual representation of the prevailing trend in the body of existing research of the dimension quality in industry, quality control in industry mainly in logistics sectors. Due to the need to keep the articles short and to the point, the results about the first analysis were conveniently ignored. In the second step of the analysis, 20 articles were thoroughly synthesized to discover the major source of information for this article's research. All articles in this phase shared the same input measurements, output metrics, and theoretical adaptation.

Table 1. Search Literature Review Criteria and Outcome

Features	Service Quality in Industries	Coherence among service quality and customer satisfaction
Research Question	How can service quality is the most important aspect in service industries?	Is there any coherence and a gap in service quality and customer satisfaction?
First Screening	30	20
	*Total article following removal of duplicate content and initial skimming of the title only	
Second Screening	22	11
	**Following an abstract analysis and year of published in (2019-2022)	
Final Screening	42	
	***Following a full-text analysis, the three study contexts are taken into account collectively and either considered as an output or as a mediating or moderator variable.	

These articles were divided into categories according to the year of published, theory applied, source journal, etc. thus in preliminary stage of the study. Considering present trend in the published literature on service quality in the service industries and customer satisfaction measurement in service industries, was shown using descriptive analytics. The results will produce a representation of ongoing research and any inadequacies in potential imminent investigations.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. A. Dimension of Quality

Depending upon that 22 measurement criteria, [Parasuraman et al. \(1985\)](#) establish ten aspects of service quality (reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles) (perceptions-minus-expectations measure). Reclassifying the 10 components into five categories reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness [Parasuraman et al. \(1988\)](#) assert that these five dimensions of service quality have reliable and consistent psychometric features. Yet, numerous academics have questioned SERVQUAL's scalability (e.g. [Van Dyke et al., 1997](#)). These researches suggest that the five SERVQUAL aspects may not be consistent across service industries and instead fluctuate. Unfortunately, limited research has been done to determine the cause of the SERVQUAL dimensions' instability. It is useful to look at how the SERVQUAL dimensions are driven in order to see why they are unstable. The steps taken by SERVQUAL to gauge service quality and identify its dimensions can be summed up as follows: ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#)). Customers' expectations of a class of services are used to gauge the expected qualities of 22 attributes, and their perceptions of a specific service are used to gauge the perceived qualities of 22 attributes. The service quality of 22 categories is then used to generate dimensions of service quality by a factor analysis (i.e., the distinction between actual and expected service). A conceptual model of service quality is proposed by [Parasuraman et al. \(1985\)](#) to describe the direct connections between different elements and service quality.

3.2. Measurement of Service Quality

Because of its distinctive qualities, such as its intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability, measuring service quality is challenging ([Bateson, 1995](#)). The terms perceptions and expectations are related to the idea of service quality, or (Servqual) ([Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990](#)). Consumers judge the quality of a service by contrasting their pre-service expectations with the actual service they received. The service will be deemed great if perceptions surpass expectations; good or suitable if perceptions just meet expectations; and awful, poor, or deficient if perceptions fall short of expectations ([Vázquez et al., 2001](#)). In SERVQUAL, the "gap" is measured explicitly by taking into account both store service performance and customer expectations. According to several researchers, performance judgments are more accurate than the gap in determining service quality ([Carman, 1990](#)). Based on this viewpoint, Parasuraman et al. created the SERVQUAL scale, which is used to measure service quality. The 22 elements on this scale, which stand for the five service quality aspects "tangibles," "reliability," "responsiveness," "assurance," and "empathy," conceptualize service quality by quantifying the gap across expectations and perceptions

Table 2. Servqual dimensions

Dimension	Definition
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
Assurance	Employees' knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
Empathy	Caring, easy access, good /communication, customer understanding and individualized attention given to cutomers
Tangibles	Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and written materials

3.2.1. Reliability

The capacity to deliver the promised service consistently and accurately is referred to as reliability. Reliability in a wide sense refers to a company's ability to deliver on its promises about delivery, service offerings, troubleshooting, and price. Consumers like to work with companies who honor their commitments. So, it plays a significant role in how the consumer perceives the quality of the services and how loyal he is. So, service providers must be aware of what customers demand in terms of dependability. The reliability dimension for financial services involves regularity, approach regarding concerns, communication with clients, uniformity, protocols, etc ([Ramya et al., 2019](#)).

3.2.2. Responsiveness

Being able to respond is being ready to assist consumers and offer fast service. This factor focuses on the manner in which customer requests, inquiries, criticisms, and issues are handled. It also emphasizes the workers' reliability, availability, commitment to their jobs, etc. It can be calculated based on how long consumers must wait for assistance, clarification, etc. Viewing the service delivery process and workers' responses to customer requests over time will help to improve the responsiveness conditions ([Ramya et al., 2019](#)).

3.2.3. Assurance

The assurance dimension is the third aspect of service quality. It can be characterized as the ability of a company and its workers to build confidence and trust in their customer. Due to customers' lack of confidence in their capacity to assess outcomes, this factor is crucial in the banking and insurance industries. Stock broking services companies work to foster loyalty and trust between important contact points for customers, such as insurance agents, brokers, and the like.

The "personal banker" serves as the primary point of contact for banking services. This dimension focuses on the employees' job knowledge and skills, correctness, politeness, etc., as well as the firm's security measures (Ramya et al., 2019).

3.2.4. Empathy

The empathy dimension is another aspect of service quality. It is described as the considerate, personalised treatment that clients receive from their banks or service providers. With personalized or tailored services, this aspect tries to express the idea that each consumer is special and unique to the business. This aspect focuses on a range of services that meet various needs of consumers, such as tailored or personalized services. Here, the service providers must be aware of the demands, desires, and preferences of the clients (Ramya et al., 2019).

3.2.5. Tangibility

Tangibility, which is referred to as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, communication materials, and technology, is the fifth dimension of service quality. All of these give clients ample information about the company's level of customer service. Also, this aspect improves the firm's reputation. As a result, the tangibility factor is crucial for businesses, and they must make significant investments in setting up physical premises (Ramya et al., 2019).

3.3. Importance of Customer Satisfaction

Satisfied customer is one of every company's primary goals. Companies understand that retaining current clients is more profitable than having to acquire new clients to make up for lost clients. Theorists in management and marketing stress the significance of customer satisfaction for a company's success (McColl-Kennedy & Schneider, 2000; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In light of this, the esteemed Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award acknowledges the significance of customer satisfaction as the primary factor in the awarding process (Dutka, 1993). Quality representation is essential to companies. In other words, the first thing that comes to mind when trying to win the competition is quality. Quality also serves as a bridge between customer needs and business objectives. In other words, businesses that continually deliver quality to customers outperform their rivals because satisfied clients are more likely to part with cash, their trust, their loyalty, and their commitment. When the primary equation's thread is followed, it becomes clear that hope is its essential component.

Hope can only be satisfied, and fulfillment only happens when there is quality. Hence, quality is basically and historically portrayed as a tool to provide satisfaction, and from that satisfaction, the business can create a particular consumer preference, or what is known as reliance. In reality, it has been demonstrated that quality (both in terms of product and service quality) results in customer satisfaction (Dwiantari, 2020). Also, however indirectly and/or insignificantly, quality affects the company's marketing performance or performance. Product durability (reliability), ease of use (effectiveness), improvement (ability to be updated to lower costs), and other attributes that give benefits are all examples of what is generally meant by "product quality." Kotler (2019) describe satisfaction as the consumer's reaction to a product or service's performance, specifically whether it can satisfy the consumer's needs, expectations, and additional desires. Three factors, namely the satisfaction of needs, expectations, and wants, can at least be used to determine whether a consumer is satisfied. Loyalty is an ongoing purchasing pattern. Loyalty, on the other hand, is defined as the desire

to spread the word through invitations, recommendations, and testimonials as well as repeat purchase behavior.

According to the explanation above, it can be concluded that a company must prioritize product quality before evaluating the extent to which customers are satisfied with the level of quality in place. Following this, the company conducts an evaluation that results in suggestions for improvement in the form of creativity (differentiation/modification) and innovation (newness). This set of initiatives is intended to preserve and enhance market segmentation while also outperforming the competition.

3.4. The Coherence and Gap of Service Quality in Logistics Industry

Researchers who use quantitative methods have attempted to connect consumer satisfaction with service quality. For this instance, a number of earlier researchers have demonstrated how customer satisfaction can be used to predict service quality (Ruyter et al., 1997). The CBSEM technique was used by Cronin et al. (2000) to investigate customer satisfaction in a service context. They considered how these debates have dominated the literature on service that helps them to understand the connections between these notions. By evaluating the effectiveness of the services provided, authorities could use this information to gauge how satisfied customers are. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985), businesses can achieve quality of service if they can narrow the gap between customer expectations and perceptions. As a result, the analysis of service quality gaps provides the basis (see figure 1).

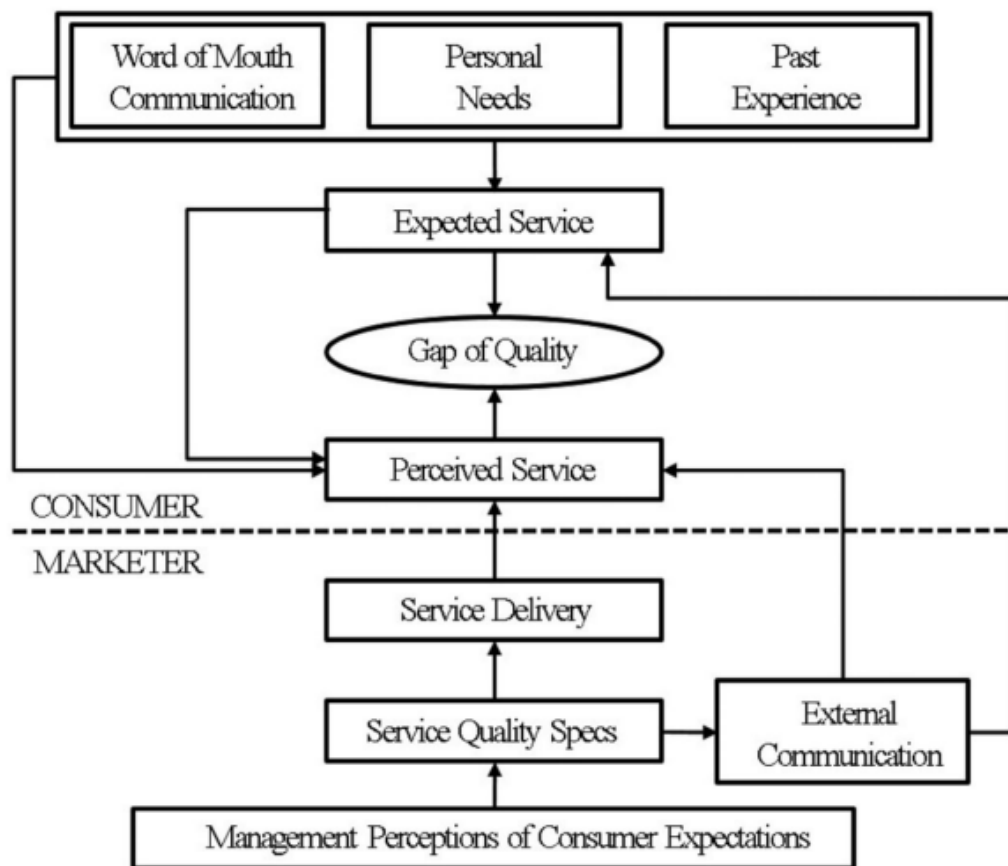


Figure 1. Conceptual model of service quality. Source: Heterogeneous dimensions of SERVQUAL (2018)

According to the new conceptual model, different circumstances on both the marketer and customer sides may cause customers to evaluate two conceptions (i.e., perceived service and expected service) differently. Although characteristics on the customer side influence customer-specific heterogeneity, those on the marketer side influence service-specific heterogeneity. Customers may assess the two notions differently because of their various word-of-mouth communications, needs, and prior experiences (i.e. sources of customer-specific heterogeneity). the two constructs (i.e. sources of service-specific heterogeneity).

Directors of service companies think about the characteristics that a service must have in order to live up to client expectations and the performance standards that are required for those features in order to provide quality service. They may also take into account the customer's expectations, the characteristics of the service sector, and the advantages and disadvantages of their company in comparison to rivals while deciding on the features and levels of a service. They develop service strategies based on such variables, translate those plans into service quality requirements, and then provide their services to clients. Be aware that service businesses employ a variety of service quality tactics to maintain their competitiveness in the marketplace with other businesses (Fitzsimmons & Fitzsimmons, 1998).

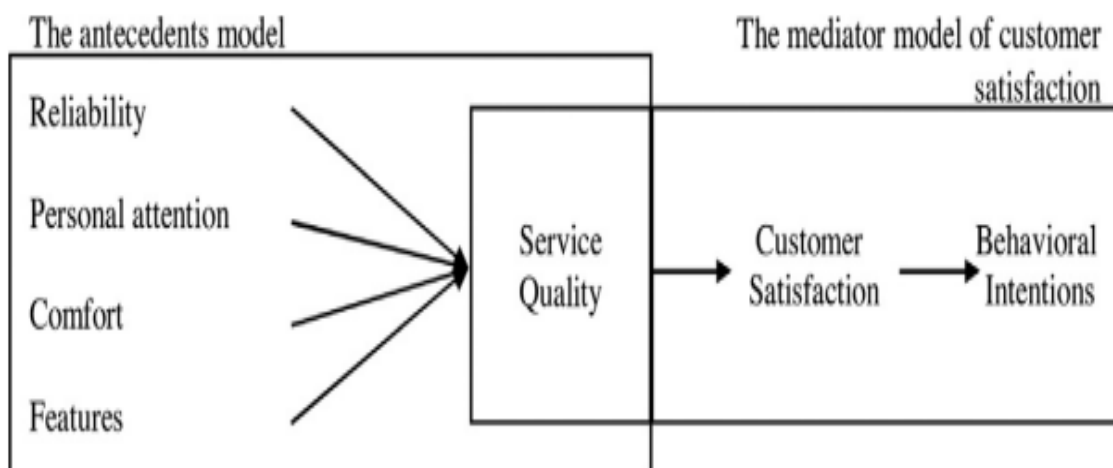


Figure 2. The antecedents and mediator model. Source: Port logistics service quality and customer satisfaction: Empirical (2019)

Without further analyzing the measured service quality, it is possible to derive unstable dimensions that are tainted by outside influences (service types and customer types). In order to purify the measured service quality, we suggest a decomposition model of measured service quality as the first phase of this paper (Figure 2). By removing the influence of service and customer types on the assessed quality levels, Total Quality Management 5 characteristics are achieved. We extract SERVQUAL measures out from refined service quality information after cleansing the measured quality data.

Traditional factor analyses also use observed quality data that has been cleaned up by eliminating the impacts of various average quality levels across service attributes on the measured quality levels of service attributes (which have been used to construct SERVQUAL dimensions in prior research). Our purification process is therefore compatible with earlier findings. As multiple service categories imply that the services themselves are distinct, we presumptively infer that the service types inside each are as well. Because each responder

reviews a specific service in a service category as part of the SERVQUAL technique for measuring service quality, we also assume that different customer types in different service categories are different (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988). For instance, services offered by service firms might be used to establish different service kinds (or customer types) (or socio-demographic variables). In conclusion, the decomposition model assumes that service types and client types in various service categories are distinct.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, empirical research has shown that five SERVQUAL model components have an impact on the quality of port logistics services. Particularly, certainty, tangibles, and empathy are the characteristics that have the most impact on the quality of port logistics services, with dependability and responsiveness coming in second and third. As a result, customers who use port logistics services are most concerned with the port's dedication to them as demonstrated by the professionalism of the staff in handling their issues, particularly the security of their shipments, prompt clearance, and on-time delivery or reception of consignments. Additionally, the impact of tangibles shows how technology and infrastructure spending contribute to higher service quality and, eventually, higher customer happiness. Meanwhile, the degree to which port workers put themselves into their customer's conditions decides if port logistics services quality is sufficient.

Reliability and responsiveness, the two remaining less significant qualities, are nevertheless significant to customers but are not their top concerns. Also, it reveals that overall service quality has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction, which supports the strategic goal of increasing market share in the logistics services sector. Assuming that all of the hypotheses are confirmed, it can be said that a five-point strategy needs to be developed because strong service quality is the foundation for customer satisfaction. From a theoretical standpoint, this study adds to the body of work on service quality in transitional and developing countries as it relates to port logistics services. The study's findings imply that port logistics service quality might be evaluated on a number of different fronts, giving practitioners a clearer idea of which operational tasks require managerial intervention. From a managerial standpoint, practitioners may find the suggested solutions below useful in improving the quality of logistics services and consequently increasing customer satisfaction. It is far more difficult than has been believed in the services literature to assess overall shape of satisfied response functions for service features so they may be categorized as attractive, one dimensional, or a must have. On how models fit cross-sectional ratings data, researchers have depended. A suitable analysis model and a particular kind of data collection, namely crossover service by respondent data to control for variations in respondents' scale use in service attribute assessment, are nonetheless necessary in order to derive meaningful inferences from ratings data.

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