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**A METHODOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SERVQUAL MODEL**

**Dr. Sameer Koranne**

**Associate Dean, Galgotias University, Greater Noida, U.P.**

*spkoranne@gmail.com*

*ORCID: 0000-0002-6917-2391*

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**Abstract**

The consistency of the service has been an important part of the method of delivery of services and is a challenge for service providers. This includes a careful analysis and comprehension of the notion of measuring it through the service industry. Since there are several scales available to quantify the quality of the service, it is imperative to objectively analyze the alternative scales to prioritize it in terms of its performance in different service sectors. The analysis is an attempt to test the commonly used Servqual model methodically and determine its supremacy over other scales.

**Key words:** Service quality, Servqual, alternate scales, service sector

**1. Introduction**

The Servqual model is the most commonly used instrument for measuring the level of service across industries and is required to respond similarly to various business conditions. Asubonteng et al (1996) stated that the standard of service has become more relevant in the light of fierce competition and intense concerns about environmental factors. If service quality is to become

the basis of marketing policy, it should be able to be calculated and made feasible by companies; SERVQUAL has become a very common method. It has been widely exposed to marketing literature and industry for an almost reliable study of service efficiency.

## **2. Discussion**

Parasuraman et al (1985) established a scale called SERVQUAL since there were many models (scales) for calculating the level of service and customer loyalty, often too generalized or ad hoc, and thus difficult to implement in the hospitality industry. In the other hand, a particular idea called SERVQUAL (SERVICES Consistency Model) was developed by TQM, which started mainly in industries concerned with goods, because of the specificity of services due to factors such as impalpability, inseparability from the supplier and recipient of service, and perishability. However, the SERVQUAL model, which involves efficiency, responsiveness, integrity, reputation, access, courtesy, connectivity, assurance, empathy and tangibles, has 10 determinants of service quality during continuous study in the field of service quality. Subsequent research by Parsuraman et al (1988) changed the determinants in the SERVQUAL and explicitly derived five service efficiency parameters such as Tangibles, Efficiency, Responsiveness, Consistency and Empathy. The approach of SERVQUAL insists on two collections of 22 questions consisting of preferences and assumptions about the service rendered. A Kuei & Lu (1997) research paper presents a synergy and alignment of marketing and activities in a service environment for continuous quality management and also addresses roles, changes and service quality metrics. It proposed the amalgamation of the service quality management method (QFD) and the measurement of service quality, i.e. SERVQUAL, and indicated that this synergy and incorporation of system resources and principles would be the organization's goal of achieving service quality.

In Anderson Cancer Center, Macaulay & Cook (1994) assessed the service level using SERVQUAL tool that was administered to patients with multiple diseases that included comparing preferences and experiences, patients regard the waiting times and billing accuracy as important issues. Also within the survey clinics, it is observed that there are two extremes in service quality and this was attributed to variations in service quality preferences of patients rather than differences in attitudes. It strongly indicates that consumer preferences may have a strong effect on the measurement of the company's quality of operation. In their research, Pariseau & McDaniel (1997) used SERVQUAL to determine both the consistency and meaning of each dimension: assurance, durability, empathy, responsiveness and tangibles, to assess consensus between participants' opinions. In order to increase service efficiency, it has been strongly developed that SERVQUAL can be used for benchmarking results. Galloway analyzed the efficacy of SERVQUAL in assessing the level of service in the education service (1998). He noted that consistency is an elusive term, particularly in public service with different customers and stakeholders, workers and students, and SERVQUAL is found to be fit in this sense and the assumption does not contribute much to the predictive value of the data.

SERVQUAL's efficacy- Bojanic & Rosan (1998) has historically been tried and tested by Bojanic & Rosan (1998) through their comprehensive study on restaurant industry as a method for assessing service quality and proved as an effective tool in determining consumer expectations of service quality in restaurant model. An analysis of the form of relationship is carried out between the level of service perceived by customers and the determinants of their service. SERVQUAL has been shown as an appraisal instrument to balance and control consumer preferences and manage the physical configuration of the goods, and a demonstration of the use of restaurants in the evaluation of quality service is included. It also involved informing service clients and implementing a total quality control policy, as well as ensuring

consistent quality with the use of technology, timely property analysis, staff and operating procedures where their abilities and shortcomings can be easily handled by the restaurant.

Li et al (2003) observed that a company's ability to attain consistency in service quality relies on the determination of service characteristics and their desired standards, as well as the prioritization of service characteristics. Service quality assessment instruments, for example, SERVQUAL, have established the linear and symmetric association between service quality differences and the overall quality of service. Further studies on the asymmetric and nonlinear aspects of this interaction helped to establish a paradigm for advancing the principle of utility to emphasize measurements and attributes. Douglas & Connor (2003) examined how closely the quality preferences of consumers and the views of customer expectations of managers and employees were balanced. Since customers hold the secret to company sustainability and profitability in the dynamic hospitality market, the standard of service is an essential tool used to gain a competitive edge. Because quality is difficult to calculate, it is important to calculate quality to determine whether the industry offers the service that customers want.

SERVQUAL model was used to define certain service parameters assumed to be critical in determining the quality of service, confirming that there is a difference between the views of managers of customer preferences and the expectations of real customers. It also connotes the creation of plans for management that can satisfy the service quality requirements of customers. Researchers have so far ignored the dimensions of service efficiency and most of the research have generally accepted SERVQUAL measurements. Nevertheless, the research undertaken by Kang & James (2004) revealed that the Grönroos model is more a suitable portrayal of service quality than that of the American perspective and its narrow emphasis on the practical quality factor in the debate regarding SERVQUAL and its reflections of the service

delivery process. As we are conscious, the level of service is very subjective and critical to the customer's satisfaction. Jasmina (2007) concluded that the implementation of the SERVQUAL model for the calculation of service quality has become important for hoteliers in order to meet the standards of the visitor and maintain a place in the growing global tourist market.

The findings of the quantitative implementation of this method provide managers with valuable knowledge to determine hotel guests' preferences and attitudes, with the goal of learning about differences in the individual dimensions of service quality. It is also verified that the use of SERVQUAL offers knowledge on the dimensions of service quality that are important from the point of view of the client as hotel managers do not know their guests' preferences because the dimensions of service quality they deem most important and do not equate to those that are most important to customers. In their study on service efficiency at spa hotels, Blesis et al (2009) successfully used SERVQUAL and concluded that the accomplishment of targets is visible by facilities that fulfill guest needs and demands. Any person in the company should ensure that every time they serve visitors, it gives them positive experience to reduce the difference in the views and visitor standards of provided services.

Many have researched service quality in the tourism sector, but there is still a controversy as to which metric has the greater validity. Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) and SERVQUAL are two major research tools, and research has adopted tests that multiply SERVQUAL by importance and calculate only performance (SERVPERF). These four key methods of assessing the level of customer service are analyzed in the analysis provided by Hudson et al (2000) by analyzing data collected in collaboration with a large U.K. Handler of the tour. It is noticed that while the rankings of the multiple elements were mixed, the distinction between these four methodologies could not be statistically confirmed.

### 3. Validity of Servqual Model

Many scholars have attempted to measure the level of service and to conceptualize its relationship with the overall success of the organization, which is mainly based on the principle of disconfirmation. By few trials, the Servqual is debated and questioned and has also been validated. In particular, the five main dimensions were criticized and Brown et al (1993) decided to have Servqual as the most recognized scale in their study. With the example of the scoring system that would not conceptualize the standard of the operation, it is claimed that Servqual does not accomplish the differentiate validity sufficiently against the scales of non-difference, leaving a question about the wording of dimensions. The same questions were posed by Dabholkar et al (2000) about the five dimensions, who considered the measured disconfirmation to be more accurate than calculated and proposed using it in gap analysis. Cronin and Taylor correctly oppose the use of the five dimensions to assess expectations toward results (1992). It is argued that these five measurements can be successfully used to assess efficiency and are sufficient to evaluate the expectations of the services rendered and totally eradicate the model of disconfirmation. They firmly believe that the aspect of perception must supersede the theory of Servqual and disconfirmation as perceived service quality itself appears as an approach or attitude that Parasuraman et al is still somewhat agreed upon (1988). Teas (1993) has raised several serious concerns and challenged the interpretation of standards and the effectiveness of standardization of expectations. He also questioned the five dimensional scope to encompass all dimensions that determine the standard of service. There is also no agreement on the number of dimensions, as Gronroos (1982) and Mels et al (1997) suggested two dimensions, Rust and Oliver (1994) suggested three dimensions, while Parasuraman et al (1988) suggested five dimensions, updated from ten dimensions from Parasuraman et al's initial analysis (1985). On the other hand, several scholars have criticized this model and doubted its authority as a calculation technique because it is prone to mistakes and errors.

The very usefulness of this instrument in interpreting the determinants of service efficiency was opposed by Teas (1993) and Brown et al (1993). Cronin & Taylor (1992) posed significant questions about the methods and proposed that to test consumer appraisal, expectations remain the most relevant. Dabholkar et al (2000) put forward a related perspective, and they observed that disconfirmation and interpretation are stronger scales for forecasting service efficiency and consumer satisfaction levels.

Parasuraman, et al (1994), faced with the result and insisted that the principle of disconfirmation is valid and that the difference in provided services is calculated. This is further substantiated by Howcroft (1992) as the key source of service efficiency as a comparison of anticipated and real results. Reviews of multiple service quality tests, however, only show that no study is capable of completely evaluating the quality of service and that more modifications and adjustments are available.

Parasuraman et al (1994) countered the paradigm of Cronin and Taylor (1992) in response to the serious issues posed by objecting to the one-dimensional approach and summing up the scores to create a single metric over all components. They insisted that it is important to evaluate Servqual's functional importance in order to seek the utmost precision and to clarify the variation if any is not contained in Serveperf. In calculating volatility, Servqual is best positioned to diagnose the lack of predictive capacity, but agrees with Serveperf's supremacy. The criticisms of Teas (1993) about the clarification of criteria of expectations and the utility of these standards were further countered by them. In order to test Servqual accurately, they recommended more analysis and re-examination of the findings against conclusions made in his thesis in order to understand their concerns.

Although Servqual's questionable reliability and inter-factor link led several researchers to use Servperf. This discussion on the supremacy of the two instruments has been underway for a long time and Caruana et al. conclude that it is unresolved (2000).

#### **4. Alternate scales of measuring Service Quality**

There are numerous references to the effective use of Servqual to assess the level of service in diverse sectors, although there are certain alternative scales used in recent research.

Spreng and Macay (1996) developed a Perceived Service Quality and Satisfaction model that indicates that the quality of service and customer satisfaction vary. Consumer preferences have a greater impact on customer loyalty, and meeting the demands posed has an impact on customer understanding. This model, however, still agrees that there is a detrimental impact due to disconfirmation. This model is useful in calculating the quality of the service, but it struggles to create mechanisms to achieve the quality of the service and its efficient use.

The model of service efficiency and relative value in retail was proposed by Sweeny et al (1997). It implies that the quality of practical service has an indirect impact on the desire of consumers to purchase, while the quality of technological service produces product and value expectations. However, this paradigm is inappropriate for calculating the level of service in general, when fewer elements have been taken into account in each building.

A relatively recent approach to the assessment of service quality is found in Dabholkar et al's context and mediator model (2000). It is proposed that customers should not be generalized as a sum of components of service quality by measuring service quality against different criteria. There is a clear need to differentiate between customer loyalty and service efficiency, and a



mediating position is found in customer service assessments. This model, though, succeeds only in evaluating behavioral intent and not the real actions of on-site consumers.

Frost and Kumar (2000) seek to assess the quality of service from the point of view of existing consumers by means of an instrument called the internal quality of service model. This scale measures internal customer expectations and also their perception of the services provided. Compared with some hypotheses, the quality of service is calculated, but the value of preferences and opinions of external consumers is not understood.

Broderick and Vachirapornpuk (2002) suggested a scale that is referred to as the Internet banking model to calculate the service level of internet banking. It sets out that consumers play a significant role in the co-production of services and the essence of customer engagement affects the efficiency of the banking sector's operation. The degree of customer engagement and perceived service is a significant factor in the quality of service assessment. However, insufficient experimentation and observed values of only one banking portal have been found to restrict the validity of this model.

Behara et al (2002) suggested a reverse SERVQUAL model that utilizes neural networks to determine that understanding only supersedes the service quality difference model. It prevents taking into account the needs of consumers and can not be checked for further use.

The aid of neural networks to consider the customer's appraisal of service quality is another attempt by Mahapatra and Khan (2007) to quantify service quality in the field of education. It is known as the Educal Service Quality Model and is acceptable for use in technical education. It also validates the standard model of Servqual, but does not assist in measuring customer loyalty.

Tsoukatos and Rand (2007) suggested the GIQUAL service quality model, suggesting that there is a clear relationship between consumer retention, loyalty and service quality. This model does not conform to standard service efficiency dimensions and verifies that the quality of service results in greater customer retention and loyalty.

In their longitudinal analysis of the Chinese banking industry, Guo et al (2008) used the Servqual model to assess service efficiency. It is named the standard of Chinese banking operation. It sets a changed scale with measurements that are effective for Chinese banks and measures the level of service accordingly. It does not ascertain the customer loyalty interaction and appraisal and is not validated in other industries or respondents.

Suk and Petersen (2010) analyze the level of satisfaction of fantasy sports web platform respondents in their Assessment Model of Sports Service Efficiency. This model argues that the most critical factor of evaluating the quality of service is customer loyalty and encourages service providers to consider the precise measurements of the quality of service. The strength of this scale has been constrained by the minimum exposure to respondents.

It is clear from earlier research that Servqual has been commonly used in numerous contexts to assess service efficiency and its dimensions have been widely explored to validate it. Finn and Lamb (1991), Teas (1993) for department stores, Johnason et al (1988) for real estate firm, Crompton and Macay (1989) for public entertainment, Bojanic (1991) for accounting agency, Babakus and Mangold (1992) for hospitals, Cronin & Taylor (1992) for finance, Boulding et al (1993) for higher education, Wels-Lips Inge et al (1998) for six industries, and ma It is noted that in order to obtain the greatest satisfaction of their clients, management of different organizations must be aware of the interpretation of dimensions with regard to their area and its relative value. The usefulness of the Servqual instrument has been improved

with improvements and the performance and durability of calculating service quality has been validated.

## 5. Conclusion

The critical analysis of the Servqual model shows that it fits major service industry industries and can be molded according to that sector's requirements. It also offers the degree of independence to analyze the service components across business segments and makes it accessible in all circumstances. In terms of management and compilation of responses, it definitely retains dominance over other models of assessing service efficiency. It is also convenient for the consumers of the respondent service to understand and can be understood without further clarification. It is also the most appropriate method for assessing the quality of service and is favoured over other instruments.

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