

DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS IN MALAYSIA – THE CASE OF A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Service quality (SERVQUAL) is now recognized as an integral component of a firm's customer satisfaction program. Therefore, it is important to understand how consumers perceive the quality of services rendered, as well as how these perceptions are translated into customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Since delivering high SERVQUAL is the cornerstone of any marketing strategy, the marketer must have the means to measure it. Despite the dearth of SERVQUAL studies in the non-Western market in the literature, the SERVQUAL dimensions have failed to receive much attention outside the Western market. This study attempts to examine the SERVQUAL dimensions of those who are concerned with the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia.

1.0 Introduction

In Malaysia the tourism industry, with food and lodging as the two major components, is a major foreign exchange earner in the services sector second only to the manufacturing industry. Malaysia was among the top three countries for the most number of tourist arrivals among the 53 commonwealth countries according to the World Tourism Organization while the Malaysian Tourism Board statistics (2008) showed that Malaysia had recorded a total of 12,891,202 tourist arrivals from January to July 2008 compared to 12,404,377 tourist arrivals for the same period in 2007, representing an increase of 3.9%. With positive market conditions, incoming tourist receipts are expected to continue to grow by 8% to 10% annually. The travel and tourism industry will continue to be a major contributor to the Malaysian GDP, with tourist receipts expected to exceed RM52 billion in 2010.

In light of the imperative role of the tourism industry to the Malaysian economy, enhancing SERVQUAL to tourists is crucial to Malaysia's success. "SERVQUAL enhances to succeed" was the message at the Malaysian Tourist Guides Conference 2008. In view of the significant contribution of the tourism industry to the Malaysian economy and the keen competition within the region for tourist arrivals, providing memorable and satisfactory experiences to tourists have become unprecedentedly important.

As a critical measure of organizational performance, SERVQUAL continues to be in the forefront of service marketing literature (Jensen and Markland, 1996) and also compels the attention of practitioners and academics (Lassar *et al.*, 2000; Yavas and Yasin, 2001). SERVQUAL is also a critical prerequisite for establishing and sustaining satisfying relationships with valued customers (Yavas and Benkenstein, 2007). Indeed, delivery of high SERVQUAL to customers results in a number of positive outcomes ranging from achieving competitive advantage to building customer loyalty (Palmer and Cole, 1995; Zahorik and Rust, 1992). Therefore, the overall upgrading of SERVQUAL in the

hospitality and tourism industry will not only benefit the country economically, but also will improve the quality of life of Malaysians in building a nation that is well-mannered – *Berbudi Bahasa*.

An existing service encounter concept called SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; 1988) describes the services that customers encompass such as tangible, reliable, assuring, empathetic and responsive which have a great impact in the domain of SERVQUAL measurements. However, numerous studies have failed to identify the reported five underlying dimensions (e.g. Reidenbach and Sandifer-Smallwood, 1990; Finn and Lamb, 1991; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Bouman and van der Wiele, 1992; Headley and Miller, 1993; Saleh and Ryan, 1992; Vandamme and Leunis, 1993). In fact, Carman (1990) found a larger number of dimensions and highlighted the multifaceted nature of some services. Peter *et al.* (1993) also mentioned that the number of dimensions of SERVQUAL is very much influenced by the context under evaluation and the methods of evaluation.

Apart from that, many researchers have criticized that SERVQUAL does not fully capture the unique aspects of non-Western cultures. Its replication has been proved to be successful in European markets (Coulthard, 2004). These replications, however, only represent the usefulness of SERVQUAL in a greater Western culture because European culture is probably not considered very different from North American culture (Winsted, 1997; Imrie *et al.*, 2000; Imrie *et al.*, 2002; and Raajpoot, 2004) or perhaps the SERVQUAL has reached a certain level. They found that consumers in different cultures not only evaluated service encounter quality along the five dimensions captured by SERVQUAL but also dimensions not captured by SERVQUAL. This was further supported when Raajpoot (2004) developed the PARKSERV scale in a non-Western context that is Pakistan, by adding the new dimensions of sincerity, formality and personalization. In addition, earlier findings reported in Donthu and Yoo (1998), Mattila (1999), and Furrer, Liu and Sudharshan (2000) showed that customers in different cultures tend to assign different meanings to existing SERVQUAL dimensions. In summary, the SERVQUAL dimensions have failed to receive validation outside the Western market (Akan 1995 and Lam 1995, 1997).

The SERVQUAL studies in Malaysia are still ongoing. Only a minimal number of research studies related to SERVQUAL in the service industry in the Malaysian context can be found in the literature. Since the dimensions that are suggested in SERVQUAL are scarcely relevant in non-Western context, particularly in a multicultural society and also because new dimensions may be emerged, it is necessary to examine the SERVQUAL dimensions that are of concern in the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia in order to catalyze its growth.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Service Quality

SERVQUAL has been an elusive concept that has aroused considerable interest and debate primarily due to the nature of services which is intangible, variable, perishable and inseparable (Parasuman *et al.*, 1985; 1988). The literature reveals the difficulties in both defining it and conceptualizing or operationalizing it as there appears not to be any overall

consensus on perceived SERVQUAL (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Rust and Oliver, 1994; Wisniewski, 2001).

The most commonly used definition is the extent to which a service meets customers' needs or expectations (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990; Asubonteng *et al.*, 1996; Wisniewski and Donnelly, 1996). On the other hand, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) defined SERVQUAL as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. According to them, if expectations are lower than performance, then the perceived quality is greater than satisfactory and hence customer satisfaction occurs. In this paper, SERVQUAL can be defined as the difference between customers' expectations for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service received (Asubonteng *et al.*, 1996).

2.2 Service Quality Dimensions

Early conceptualizations (e.g., Gronroos 1982, 1984; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985) showed that perceived SERVQUAL was based on the disconfirmation paradigm where SERVQUAL was a comparison between consumers' expectations and their perceptions of the service they actually received. In addition to adapting the disconfirmation paradigm to the measurement of SERVQUAL, Gronroos (1984) developed The Nordic Model. He identified two SERVQUAL dimensions. The first dimension was technical quality that referred to the outcome of the service performance or what the customer received in the service encounter. The second dimension was functional quality which was the subjective perception of how the service was delivered.

Meanwhile, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) also used this disconfirmation paradigm as the basis to develop the five dimensions of service experience. Of these five dimensions, reliability was the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness was the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance was the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. Empathy was the caring, individualized attention provided to the customer; and tangibles were the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials. Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) argued that, regardless of the types of service, consumers evaluate SERVQUAL using similar criteria, which could be grouped into the fourth mentioned dimensions, also known as the SERVQUAL scale.

Despite wide usage by academicians and practitioners in various industries across different countries, a number of studies have questioned the conceptual and operational base of the SERVQUAL model (Babakus and Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; and Teas, 1994). More specifically, these studies have failed to confirm the five dimensions structure across different industries. For example, a study conducted in the hospitality industry reported five dimensions of SERVQUAL but these differed from those in SERVQUAL model (Saleh and Ryan, 1991). These findings suggested that further customization of the scale for the hospitality industry was necessary.

Building on the previous model by Gronroos (1982) and Bitner (1992), Rust and Oliver (1994) proposed the Three-Component Model. In this model, they suggested that SERVQUAL consisted of three distinct parts: service product, service delivery and service

environment. Service product referred to the outcome and the consumer's perception of the service. Service delivery was the consumption process and any relevant events that occurred during the service act. The service environment was the internal and external atmosphere. Service environment was important because it was viewed as an integral role in consumer service perception development (Bitner, 1992). Its focus was the relationships that existed between SERVQUAL, service value and satisfaction.

Dabholkar *et al.* (1996) proposed a hierarchical model of retail SERVQUAL, the Retail SERVQUAL Scale (RSQS). This model was created with specific interest in retail SERVQUAL. The researchers argued that SERVQUAL had not been successfully adapted to and validated for the retail store environment. They also suggested that the dimensionality of SERVQUAL in a retail setting might not be similar to that of SERVQUAL in pure service industries. The RSQS was a multilevel model, in which retail SERVQUAL was viewed as a higher-order factor that was defined by two additional levels of attributes (dimensions level and subdimensions level). The instrument included five primary dimensions that were physical aspects, reliability, personal interaction, problem solving and policy; and six subdimensions: appearance, convenience, promises, doing it right, inspiring confidence and courtesy. The outcome of the research indicated that SERVQUAL needed to be assessed at several levels, with the main and sub-dimensions.

The most recent conceptualization of SERVQUAL was the hierarchical approach model by Brady and Cronin (2001). They integrated previous conceptualizations such as Rust and Oliver's model and Dabholkar's *et al.* (1996) to develop a hierarchical and multidimensional model of perceived SERVQUAL. In their model, SERVQUAL factors were used as modifiers of the model's subdimensions. They described a third-order factor model, where quality service was explained in terms of three primary dimensions: interaction quality, physical environment quality and outcome quality. Each of these dimensions consisted of the three corresponding subdimensions: attitude, behavior and experience (interaction quality); ambient conditions, design and social factors (physical environment quality); waiting time, tangibles and valence (outcome quality). This approach was believed to better explain the complexity of human perceptions than the conceptualizations currently offered in the literature (Dabholkar *et al.*, 1996; Brady, 1997) as such allowed us to know what defined SERVQUAL perceptions, how SERVQUAL perceptions were formed and the importance of where the service experience took place.

2.3 Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede (1980) illustrated that people's core cultural values were much more highly persistent than their secondary beliefs. For example, Asian societies still conformed to traditional values despite modernization and trends toward Western values (Hsu, 1985; Tan and McCulloch, 1985). Kugler (1998) also stated that Asian consumers held different cultural core values compared to Western counterparts and to date, the Asian cultural context had remained strong. Meanwhile, Zeithmal *et al.* (1993) had shown that some determinants of customer expectations such as physical, social and psychological were strongly influenced by the social and cultural environment of customers. Other researches also argued that neither the cultures in the West nor the East were totally homogenous as there were intra-sociocultural dynamics at work. (Khaleefa *et al.*, 1996; Rudowicz, 2003).

In collectivist societies, people typically consider the group as the fundamental component of society instead of the individual. They value harmony and avoid confrontation at all costs. Given their emphasis on relationship maintenance and harmony, East-Asian consumers are highly sensitive to criticism and interpersonal treatment during service encounters. In addition, the concept of 'face' or 'public reputation' is a very important value among the East Asians in the context of personal relationship and social exchange. 'Face.' refers to the idea of gaining respect, social and professional position, reputation, and self-image. The granting of 'face' have been highly valued and widely practiced in Asian society as it becomes the dominant force in shaping interaction patterns and actions (Tan, 1986). In terms of cultural collectivism, losing 'face' in the group is worse than any other punishment in Asian society.

Articles by Winsted (1997), Donthu and Yoo (1998) and Mattila (1999) revealed the links between cultural dimensions and SERVQUAL dimensions by studying a subset of possible relationships. An example of this influence, shown by Mattila (1999), is that customers with Western cultural backgrounds are more likely to rely on the tangible cues from the physical environment to evaluate SERVQUAL than their Asian counterparts. Heskett *et al.* (1990) also supported the view that cultural factors would provide valuable inputs for international market segmentation and resource allocation across the SERVQUAL dimensions. If the relative importance of the SERVQUAL dimensions to customers is likely to vary depending on their culture, resource allocation on different dimensions of SERVQUAL should be contingent on the importance attached to them by customers. Thus, understanding the relationship between culture and perceived SERVQUAL may provide useful insights for how firms should allocate resources in different cultural groups.

2.4 The Link between Cultural Dimensions and Service Quality

There have been studies relating culture to SERVQUAL (Anderson and Fornell, 1994; Collier, 1994) as well as the influence of cultural dimensions on satisfaction and perceived SERVQUAL (Winsted, 1997; Donthu and Yoo, 1998; Mattila, 1999). Winsted (1997) examined how consumers in the United States and Japan evaluate service encounters. She developed behavioral-based service encounter dimensions for the two countries and identified significant cross-cultural differences on these dimensions. The dimensions identified in the United States are civility, personalization, remembering, conversation, congeniality, delivery and authenticity. Those identified in Japan are civility, personalization, conversation, concern and formality. Using regression analyses, she also showed that these dimensions explain a significant portion of overall satisfaction with service encounter.

Mattila (1999) examined the impact of culture on customer evaluation of complex services. Her goal was to understand the trade-offs that Western and Asian customers were willing to make between personalized service and pleasant physical environment in the context of luxury hotels. She provided a framework that added to Winsted's (1997) study by explaining the cultural differences between Western and Asian customers in terms of individualism versus collectivism, power distance (Hofstede 1980, 1991) and high-versus-low context communication (Hall, 1984). However, she did not control these dimensions when she split her sample into three categories: Westerners, Asian Chinese and Asian Indian. Her findings suggested that customers with a Western cultural background were

more likely to rely on the tangibles cues from the physical environment than would their Asian counterparts and that the hedonic dimension of the consumption experience might be more important for Western consumers than for Asians.

Donthu and Yoo (1998) studied the effect of customers' cultural orientation on their SERVQUAL expectations. They used Hofstede's dimensions of culture and the dimensions of SERVQUAL from the SERVQUAL scale to develop and test hypotheses relating the five dimensions of culture with both a measure of the overall SERVQUAL expectation and the five SERVQUAL dimensions. They found that there was a linkage between the cultural dimensions and SERVQUAL dimensions.

Through reviewing previous studies on SERVQUAL, it is possible that the present study may capture different dimensions that are not captured by SERVQUAL as the cultures of Malaysians are dissimilar from Western cultures. Therefore, the need of having an instrument that measures the SERVQUAL in Malaysian service industries arises.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

The current study adopts an exploratory qualitative approach, which is focus group interviews, to generate items representing various facets of SERVQUAL and also to identify the dimensions customers consider when evaluating the quality of services across the two industries. This methodology is consistent with previous research such as that of Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) who also employed focus group interviews to identify the dimensions for their SERVQUAL model. Through the execution of focus group interviews used on customers, an in-depth understanding of the issues surrounding how provision and expectation of the quality offering of the service provider was developed.

The sampling frame included three major ethnic groups of consumers from the restaurant and hotel industries. The qualitative research stage entailed performing four group interviews, each with nine respondents from three ethnic groups. For each industry, there were two group interviews. The population targeted for this study was the local consumers who received services from the two service industries in the last three months. The participants were selected by using the researcher own judgment or selections with purpose (Tellstrom *et al.*, 2006). The researcher also considered the demographic criteria (age and education level) of the participants. Other than that, the participants were selected by using the snowballing method which was that the initial participants were requested to recommend the services to their friends who were from the same background as their's (Tellstrom *et al.*, 2006).

During the interview, the participants were asked whether they had patronized any service industry outlet during the last three months. The participants were asked to think of, for instance, their dining experiences (positive and negative critical incidents) and to indicate the relevant attributes of the restaurant that they perceived as part of the quality of service. The moderator stimulated the participants into communicating without influencing their opinions, producing an extensive debate. However, should the case arise that some of the classic items which had been identified by reviewing secondary information sources were not mentioned, the moderator, at the end of the meeting, attempted to obtain opinions as to

whether this was due to forgetfulness or through not considering the attributes to be relevant. Finally, the attributes of SERVQUAL about which there exist greatest unanimity were selected and put in the consumer's own words. All interviews were recorded on digital audio player and fully transcribed. The resulting transcriptions were analyzed and a number of potential antecedent factors emerged.

The data collected through focus group were verbatim transcribed and it was found that the research yielded a number of potential antecedent factors. The data for the focus group were analyzed using a coding system. The inductive categorization method that involved labeling recurring factors found in a passage of text was applied (Spiggle, 1994; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Similar processes were referred to as content analysis in the services literature (de Chernatony and Riley 1999; Tax *et al.* 1998). The method has been used extensively in consumer behavior research to identify and document thematic relationships among various text passages (McCracken 1988; Richins 1997; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Thompson 1997, 1999; Thompson and Hirschman 1995).

In this research, three independent coders processed the survey results to identify and categorize the factors that influence customer perceptions of quality services. The coders were familiar with qualitative research procedures but not with the marketing literature and were unaware of any a priori conceptualization. The process was therefore data driven, as the objective was to identify emergent factors from the open-ended responses (Spiggle, 1994). The coders placed the responses into multiple categories. They discussed disagreements; if a resolution could not be reached, the incident was counted against the reliability assessment (Kassarjian, 1977). All dimensions emanating from the responses were counted, but only those judged distinct from the other variables in the model will be included in the conceptualization.

4.0 Results

The study revealed that several aspects influence consumers' perception of SERVQUAL; however, four major themes were present in the responses. The four primary categories of SERVQUAL, namely, interaction quality, physical environment quality, outcome quality and personalization quality were explored as well as twelve subcategories that further refined the basis of the comments. Full details of the results, including a typology of SERVQUAL and excerpts from the results, are provided in Table 1.

Interestingly, the classification of the data suggested that personalization of service was found to be an extremely important dimension of service evaluation which was different from the Brady and Cronin (2001) model. For example, one consumer said,

“Another good thing about the regular restaurant is that they know what I actually want to eat. If they have the new menu, they will introduce or recommend to me. So, I will feel very proud. I feel like I am the member there, very exclusive. Then I feel like I am special because they will tell me as they know I never taste that new menu before.”

Similarly, another customer reported the following when reflecting on the experience:

“We don't need to order our food. We reach there, I think by five or ten minutes, the food

is already on the table. Sometime, if I bring my friends together to the restaurant, the server might ask my friend what do you want or what do you like to drink? But they won't ask me. And then they will bring my favorite drink and put it on table. So, it makes me feel like I am unique over there. He didn't ask me anything but I can have a drink over here."

The preceding excerpts were typical of many of the consumers' responses. Thus, it appeared that personalization influenced consumers' perceived SERVQUAL.

Overall the qualitative responses indicated that the SERVQUAL was very subjective and also quite complex. To gain a deeper understanding of how consumers define SERVQUAL, further analysis needs to be done.

Table 1: Responses by Consumers

Category	Comments
Interaction Quality	
Attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The house keeper, they just don't know how to smile and also the reception there" • "They have double standard in treating the local and foreign customer. We are paying the same, no something extra. They should the same service to everyone"
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The server didn't even apologize to me. At least, she should say sorry, because I am attend the call, no one else or something. She could response to me what happen explain. She didn't explain to me and nothing happen. • "The server will show face if we take a long time to order the food"
Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They don't know what to recommend, read through the menu with you" • "I feel frustrated when staff unable to provide information upon asking"
Physical Quality	
Ambient conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Some of the hotel, the type of lighting so dark. You go inside like go to a haunted house" • "The hotel should be not dim, light everywhere, noticeable, not a single shadow anywhere"
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The size of the lift in the hotel is very small" • "No matter is high or low class restaurant. They should divide into two section, smoking and non-smoking"
Social factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The customer that sat besides my table screaming and complaining about the price, make us can't continue our dinner as too noisy. • "I feel bad when other customer smoking at the dining area"
Outcome Quality	
Waiting time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The server take more than 45 minutes to serve the food" • "I waited long in room, about an hour for a toothpaste"
Tangibles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Most problem with the TV because some channel cannot access" • "With uniform, the server looks more organized, neat and more professional"
Valence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • " I feel guilty as I go during closing hour but the service was very good" • "We forgot to bring our wallet but the boss say never mind"
Personalization	
Close relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "They recognize us and address with our name" • "They are familiar with our face, which meal we will order"

Special treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If they have new menu, they will recommend to you, so you will feel very proud in front of my friends” • “We don’t need to order our food, the food is already on the table. I feel like I am unique over there”
Personal attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “They will really make it a point for them to take care of you which is very sweet” • “The server was watching TV when I wanted to make payment. He is not paying attention to me.

5.0 Discussion

For the last two decades, SERVQUAL has received much attention from practitioners, managers and researchers due to its apparent relationship to business performance, lower costs, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, customer retention and profitability (Leonard and Sasser, 1982; Reichheld and Sasser, 1990; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Gammie, 1992; Hallowell, 1996; Chang and Chen, 1998; Gummesson, 1998; Lassar *et al.*, 2000; Silvestro and Cross, 2000; Newman, 2001; Sureshchander *et al.*, 2002; Guru, 2003). Yet, to date, the conceptualization and measurement of SERVQUAL perception have been the most debated and controversial topics in the services marketing literature. In fact, perceived SERVQUAL has proved to be a difficult concept to grasp. Brady and Cronin (2001) described the conceptual work on SERVQUAL as “divergent” while Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) and Smith (1999) referred it to “elusive”.

This study attempted to examine the SERVQUAL dimensions of those that are of concern in the hospitality and tourism industry in Malaysia. We provide qualitative evidence that different dimensions emerge compared to previous conceptual dimensions such as SERVQUAL. Each subdimension is appropriately conceived as an aspect of SERVQUAL. Taken together, the results appear to be applicable to the industries of concern.

First, we agree upon the view that perceived SERVQUAL is evaluated on the basis of three main dimensions: interaction, physical environmental and outcome quality. These three aspects of SERVQUAL are adapted from Brady and Cronin’s (2001) study. They had combined Gronroos’s (1982, 1984) seminal idea that SERVQUAL is assessed according to customer evaluations of outcomes as well as interactions with service employees and Rust and Oliver’s (1994) three-component conceptualization of SERVQUAL. The combination constitutes a customer’s primary perception of the quality of service. Therefore, it appears that the categorization of SERVQUAL is appropriate to Malaysian cases as well.

Second, our qualitative and empirical results also indicate that a new dimension has emerged, which is personalization. This theme is consistent with the findings that were reported in Raajpoot’s (2004) study where he also pointed out the need of this dimension. This is an important aspect which was not covered in the literature which is concerns over the recognition and respect of a customer’s social status and the provision of preferential treatment (Raajpot, 2004). In societies with high power distance like Malaysia (Hofstede, 1991; Abdullah, 1992), public recognition of one’s social status or granting ‘face’ is very important (Hofstede, 1980). In other words, Malaysian consumers are in favor in gaining respect, social and professional positions, reputation and self-image. Consequently, they are highly sensitive to criticism and interpersonal treatment during service encounters.

Yet we argue that SERVQUAL perceptions are multilevel or hierarchical. Indeed, Carman (1990) noted that customers tend to break SERVQUAL dimensions into various subdimensions. There were also studies that identified the attributes or factors that defined the subdimensions (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Dabholkar *et al.*, 1996). On the basis of these findings, we come up with subdimensions of this new theme: recognize the customers and their needs (close relationship), provide unique treatment to the customer (special treatment) and give full attention to the customer (personal attention).

Third, as what we have mentioned earlier in this paper, we found that perspectives like the Nordic and the American school did not fully capture the unique aspects of non-Western cultures. Several researchers have found that consumers in different cultures not only evaluated service encounter quality along the five dimensions captured by SERVQUAL but also dimensions not captured by SERVQUAL (Winsted, 1997; Imrie *et al.*, 2000; Imrie *et al.*, 2002; Raajpoot, 2004). The resulting impasse has led to a call for research to reconsider the various dimensions of SERVQUAL. In this research, we have the same finding where dimension like personalization is not included in the Western study.

Taken together, the findings strongly suggest that today's restaurant service providers need to understand how their customers assess the quality of service experiences. In fact, they should seek balance on every aspect of SERVQUAL dimensions. They should balance their efforts and resource allocation to every functional aspect such that customers will find every service dimension to be satisfactory. Likewise, the results presented here require managerial attention in efforts to improve consumer perceptions of SERVQUAL. Therefore, our findings can guide managers as they endeavor to enhance customers' service experiences.

On the other hand, this study has significant managerial contributions. It encourages further research in the service marketing and relationship marketing. This study also provides insights into the cultural-specific SERVQUAL facets. The results show that cultural orientation influences customer perceptions of SERVQUAL. These new findings will foster further research in the area. The estimation of the effects of the cultural factors would provide valuable input for intentional market segmentation and resource allocation across the SERVQUAL dimensions.

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