

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT SELF-SERVICE LAUNDRIES: SERVQUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the perception and factors that most influence customer satisfaction towards the quality of self-service laundry services by using the SERVQUAL Model. This study uses a questionnaire research instrument that is divided into 7 parts, namely part A on the demographics of the respondents, part B on the dimension of physical form, part C on reliability, part D on the dimension of responsiveness, part E on the dimension of assurance, part F on the dimension of empathy and part G on customer satisfaction. The study sample consists of university staff and students who use the self-service laundry service, a total of 155 people. By using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science), researchers can translate data for descriptive and regression analysis. As a result of the findings of this study, it was found that there is a positive perception in the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model towards the quality of self-service laundry services. In fact, the results of this study also found that dimensions of assurance, responsiveness and physical form have an influence in determining customer satisfaction with the quality of self-service laundry services. At the end of this study, the researcher suggested that business entrepreneurs or self-service services to be more aware of the issue of hygiene, safety and equipment facilities that can work well considering the perception of guarantee, responsiveness and physical form have been proven to have a strong influence in this study.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, SERVQUAL model, self service laundry

KUALITI PERKHIDMATAN DAN KEPUASAN PELANGGAN DI DOBI LAYAN DIRI: MODEL SERVQUAL

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini adalah bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti persepsi dan faktor yang paling mempengaruhi kepuasan pelanggan terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan dobi layan diri dengan menggunakan Model SERVQUAL. Kajian ini menggunakan instrumen kajian soal selidik yang terbahagi kepada 7 bahagian iaitu bahagian A mengenai demografi responden, bahagian B mengenai dimensi bentuk fizikal, bahagian C mengenai kebolehpercayaan, bahagian D mengenai dimensi responsif, bahagian E mengenai dimensi jaminan, bahagian F mengenai dimensi empati dan bahagian G mengenai kepuasan pelanggan. Sampel kajian adalah terdiri daripada staf dan pelajar university yang menggunakan perkhidmatan dobi layan diri iaitu seramai 155 orang. Dengan menggunakan SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science), pengkaji dapat menterjemahkan data untuk analisis dekskriptif dan regresi. Hasil daripada dapatan kajian ini, didapati bahawa wujudnya persepsi positif dalam dimensi model SERVQUAL terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan dobi layan diri. Malah hasil dapatan kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa dimensi jaminan, responsif dan bentuk fizikal mempunyai pengaruh dalam menentukan kepuasan pelanggan terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan dobi layan diri. Di akhir kajian ini, pengkaji mencadangkan agar usahawan perniagaan atau perkhidmatan layan diri untuk lebih cakna mengenai isu kebersihan, keselamatan dan kemudahan peralatan yang boleh berfungsi dengan baik memandangkan persepsi terhadap jaminan, responsif dan bentuk fizikal telah terbukti mempunyai pengaruh yang kuat dalam kajian yang dilakukan ini.

Kata kunci: *Kepuasan pelanggan, model SERVQUAL, dobi layan diri*

INTRODUCTION

The quality of service and customer satisfaction is the pillar of effectiveness and profit of every organization. In order to ensure that an organization can maintain competitiveness and lead its field, quality and satisfaction factors are very important to continue moving forward. The services provided will always give different perceptions and views to customers because basically if an organization provides quality services, then customer satisfaction and their loyalty to a service will increase.

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985, 1988, 1990) service quality refers to the difference between customers' expectations and customers' perceptions. They construct dimensions, which are known as SERVQUAL where refer the customer's perception towards physical form (tangibles) which is the physical facilities and equipment provided for the customer, the reliability is the ability to complete the service as promised, responsiveness which is the desire to help the customer and provide fast service, assurance which is the ability to cultivate confidence and trust in using a service and lastly, empathy which is concern in giving attention and consideration to customers.

Together with Abili, Fatemeh, & Maryam (2012) found that customers will consider these five dimensions in the evaluation related to service quality. So by understanding the concept of SERVQUAL, organizations can ensure the factors that affect customer satisfaction with the quality of services provided.

In this study, researcher focused on service quality in self-service laundry where the machines provided totally do the job. The convenience of this service may be a little awkward for customers who are using it for the first time. Although in principle, this self-service laundry or coin laundry was introduced as early as 1949 in England (Siti Nuraini Abu Bakar, 2017). Technology innovation and time constraints are likely to be among the factors that cause this service culture to emerge in Malaysia.

Notably, self-service is a business where the owner does not need to be at the business premises to carry out the business process. However, there are also self-service laundry that provide employees or shopkeepers to help customers if they need help during washing or drying process, money exchange or to ensure that the premises are in a clean and in controlled condition. So, it can be concluded that self-service laundry operations consist of three basic things namely care, maintenance

and payment collection management, while customers only need to use coin system or even debit or credit card to start the machines provided at the self-service laundry premises.

The advancement in the quality of service delivery will lead to a new lifestyle for customers. The acceptance or rejection of an innovation starts when the customer knows and understands about a service that wants to be offered. According to Gayan Nayanajith & Dissanayake (2019), customers will always look for services that offer the best value and convenience to complete their tasks and interests. Therefore, organizations should take this opportunity to provide more effective service quality facilities to their customers. On the contrary, there are bound to be parties who will take the opportunity to create various problems or issues where the technology take place. Astro Awani (Salim Aziz, 2018) and Sinar Harian (Saifullah Ahmad, 2021) reported there have been cases of theft involving self-service laundries at the same time impacting the security system provided. These issues, will definitely give a negative perception to the services provided, not to mention when the issue of hygiene is questioned (Suki, 2019) which will sometimes cause a sense of apprehension because relatively speaking, self-service laundry services are not limited to any- which individuals want to use this facility. Since customer will feel satisfy if the service served to them can fulfil their needs and wants (Hussin & Salleh, 2016) besides customer safety is taken into account.

Therefore, this study was conducted to examine whether the SERVQUAL model affects customer satisfaction with service quality in self-service laundries in Malacca where the students and workers will be the respondents. The study to identify the main factors that give a positive perception to the quality of self-service laundry services and at the same time to identify the most influencing factors in determining customer satisfaction with the quality of self-service laundry services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SERVQUAL helps seller (entrepreneur) to identify potential gaps between expectations and perceptions between internal and external factors in a service (Booth, 2003; Mat Nasir & Lee, 2011; Roslan et. al., 2017). Evaluation in using the SERVQUAL concept is based on five dimensions which are the most consistent dimensions in identifying customer satisfaction with a service (Booth, 2003; Mat Nasir & Lee, 2011; Roslan et. al., 2017). According to Mat Nasir et. al. (2011), each dimension provides its own assessment where the description for each dimension is as follows:

- i. Physical Evidence: Physical facilities, condition of equipment and appearance of personnel.
- ii. Dimension of Reliability: The ability to perform services correctly and accurately and reliably.
- iii. Responsive Dimension: Willingness to act to help customers and perform services promptly.
- iv. Assurance Dimension: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to instill trust and confidence in their customers.
- v. Empathy Dimension: Concern, individual attention given by service providers to their customers.

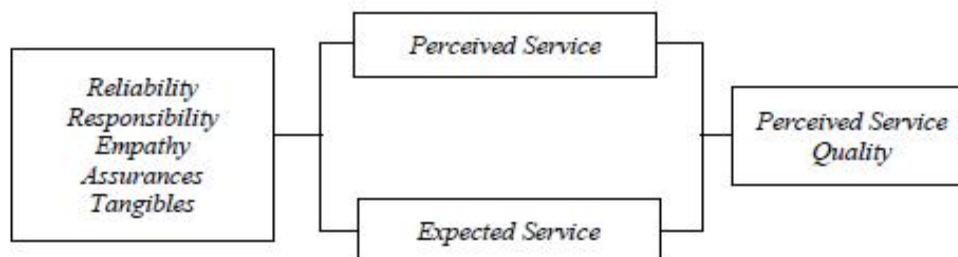


Figure 1: Source adapted from Parasuraman et. al. (1988)

Based on the hypothesis to be studied, a clear understanding of the SERVQUAL model or concept is a priority in this study. According to Kobiruzzaman (2022), each dimension has its own definition and evaluation. The following is a clear definition of the SERVQUAL model which is physical evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

i. Dimensions of Physical Evidence

Physical evidence covers the physical appearance of equipment, personnel and communication materials (Kobiruzzaman, 2022). Customers tend to expect clean facilities and premises and maintain a professional culture. This emphasis is also expressed in a study conducted by Miklós, Hossam, János, József, & Judit (2019) who argue that customers tend to choose and have a quality life, which is not only what services are offered but also involves the equipment of facilities others such as a clean and unique environment and facilities that can be used and accessed easily. The customer's readiness for a service also needs to be emphasized where psychological aspects such as attitude, interest, perception, hope, behavior, personal goals and so on can play a very important role in influencing the customer's pattern and behavior towards frequency of use and selection of products or services (Kobiruzzaman, 2022).

ii. Dimensions of Reliability

Reliability is identified from how the organization provides or performs a service in the right conditions at first use (at first glance) (Miklós et. al., 2019). Reliability is also known as the ability of a business or organization to perform their services accurately and reliably as promised (Hennayake & G., 2017; Kobiruzzaman, 2022). Reliability found to have a significant influence on customer satisfaction.

iii. Responsive Dimension

Responsiveness in service is a quick response and the ability to provide feedback if a customer has a problem with service provided (Gulc, 2017; Kobiruzzaman, 2022). Efficient and responsive employees or services are one of the responsibility where they are ready to help customers in providing fast service (Pakurar, Haddad, Nagy, Popp, & Olah, 2019). This shows that responsiveness has a significant effect on perception that can affect customer satisfaction (Firdous, 2017).

iv. Assurance Dimension

Assurance in service shows the service provider's ability to provide confidence and trust to its customers or users (Kobiruzzaman, 2022). A business must ensure that their employees are trained and knowledgeable in the performance of their duties. Skilled employees will ensure that their customers are given a good and quick response to their problems. This is one of the alternatives to provide trust and assurance to customers. One of the most important aspects in service quality is guarantee. This can be proved where customers choose to deal with people or services they can trust. The relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction has been confirmed by several studies (Subashini, 2016).

v. Empathy Dimension

The empathy variable in service shows the individual attention that an organization gives to their customers. Empathy includes communication between organization and employees with their customers, understanding the needs and wants of customers (Kobiruzzaman, 2022). Felix (2017) stated that empathy shows the type and individual attention that a business gives to their customers. Empathy consists of physical and social from the ease of their relationship, communicating with customers in appropriate language and listening to their feedback and finally trying to know the customer's preferences and needs. In the other hands, employees should be fully engaged with the customer in providing services. The way an organization cares and gives individual attention to their customers makes their customers feel special and valued and this is related to empathy in service (Miklós et. al., 2019). It is one of the challenges for an organization to offer services or products in improving the quality of their services. A. Jalil, A. Malek, & Er (2015) asserted that the quality of service provided by the organization has a close relationship with customer satisfaction.

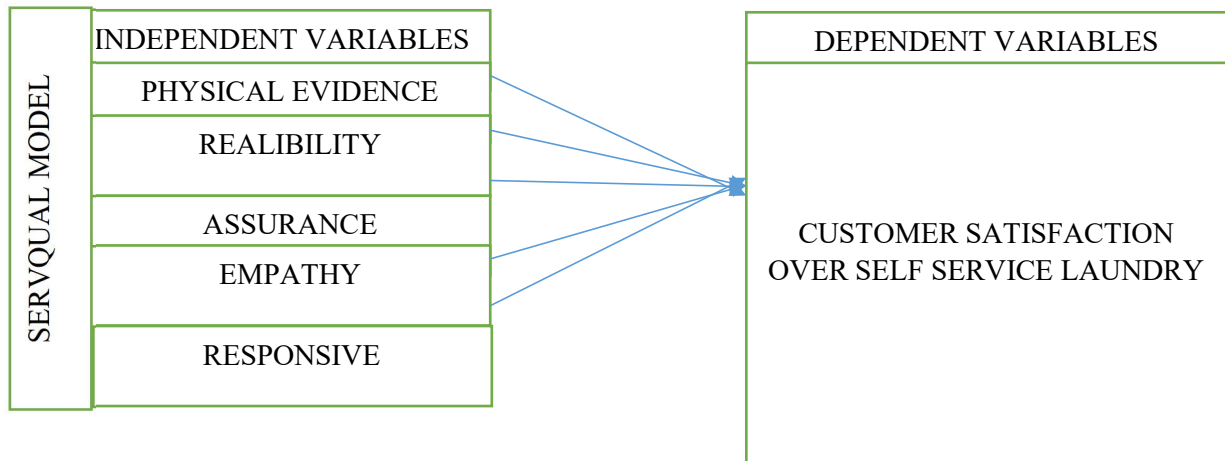


Figure 2: Research Framework

Source: SERVQUAL adapted by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1994); Shit (2018).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative study was used and a survey method using a questionnaire. According to Sekaran (1992), the quantitative research method as a whole means the collection of data obtained from the questionnaire given to the respondents. In this study, the researcher will distribute questionnaires to respondents in University of Melaka via Google Forms.

The questionnaire consists 7 sections that the respondent needs to answer, which are parts A for demographic of respondents, B for Physical Form Evidence, C for Reliability, D for Responsive, E for Assurance, F for Empathy and G for Service Quality at Self Service Laundries. The researcher using 5-likert scale from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

Determination of the total sample size to be collected is 156 respondents. The sampling of this study was taken using simple random sampling. Descriptive analysis is used to look at the demographics where the researcher can obtain analytical findings from various perceptions according to the demographics of the respondents at University of Melaka. Multiple linear regression analysis will be used to find out between the influence of independent variables on dependent variables (Ghozali, 2018). The researcher conducted pilot study to test the instruments and the results of the pilot study have shown whether the items in the questionnaire were improved or discarded. Thus, the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.901. This shows that this research instrument is very good and can be used (Piaw, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

i. Demographic Findings

Descriptive statistics are used to get an overall picture of the data that has been collected, to make a summary and a summary of the data (Seok, Bullare @ Hj. Bahari, & Mutang, 2015). This section explains about the descriptive background of the respondents which consists of gender, age, race, marital status, education level and questions about the use of self-service laundry services.

Table 1: Demographic Findings

Items	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	33	21.2
Female	123	78.8
Age		
< 25 years old	116	74.4
26 – 35 years old	37	23.7
36 – 45 years old	3	1.9
> 45 years old	0	0

Race		
Malay	156	100
Chinese	0	0
Indian	0	0
Others		
Marital Status		
Single	153	98.1
Married	3	1.9
Others	0	0
Level of Education		
SPM	1	0.6
Diploma	53	34
Bachelor Degree	100	64.1
Masters	2	1.3
PhD	0	0
Have you ever use a self-laundry service?		
Yes	155	99.4
No	1	0.6

Based on Table 1, it can be described that the number of male respondents is 21.2% equivalent to 33 respondents which is lower than the number of female respondents which is 78.8% equivalent to 123 respondents. In terms of age, 74.4% of respondents are in the age range of 25 years and below and 100% are Malays. In addition, 98.1 % are single and most of them has Bachelor Degree which covered by 64.1% from total respondents. From observation most respondents experiencing using self-laundry services (99.4%).

ii. Findings on Dimensions

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Physical Evidence		
Modern equipment	4.77	.439
At attractive interior	4.15	.820
Comfortable waiting chairs.	3.90	.646
Have facilities such as fans or baskets.	4.35	.880
Additional facilities such as sinks or water machines	3.08	.977
2. Reliability		
Feel content to use the machines at the laundry.	4.14	.665
Machine's instruction manual can provide the service.	4.17	.560
Washed/dried shirt is clean and free of any dirt or other uncertainties.	4.09	.793
Machine in good condition and regularly maintained.	3.58	.737
Environment of the self-service laundry is always in order.	4.34	.801
3. Responsive		
Emergency contact number provided	4.61	.638
Alarm or emergency system is functioning.	3.40	.894
Workers who supervise the self-service laundry premises when damage occurs.	3.70	.850
Workers who supervise the self-service laundry premises especially at night.	3.28	.843
Workers who supervise the self-service laundry premises so that the service runs smoothly.	3.09	.983
4. Assurance		
Self-service laundry have closed circuit cameras (CCTV).	4.63	.695

Environment at the laundry frequented by people.	4.57	.674
Has easy-to-understand instructions and how to use it.	4.30	.583
Machine used is safe.	4.41	.718
5. Empathy		
Prefer a 24-hour self-service laundromat.	4.75	.551
Price for each service is reasonable.	4.34	.793
Laundromat has special parking lot for their customers.	2.98	.963
Prefer self-service laundromats provide folding services for their customers.	3.07	1.295
Prefer self-service laundromats provide Wi-Fi access to their customers.	4.79	.531

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis Result

Table 2 shows a descriptive analysis of the independent variables. The highest mean score which is the main factor in providing a positive perception for the dimension. Physical evidence shows mean value of 4.77 where most of respondents agree that the self-service laundry used has modern equipment such as coin token exchange machines and others. The mean score of reliability is 4.34 which indicates that respondents agree the service environment of the self-service laundromat is always in order. Additionally, the mean value for responsive is 4.61 where respondents agree that the self-laundry services provide contact number in case of emergency. Meanwhile, dimension assurance indicates 4.63 of mean value where most respondents agree self-laundry services provide CCTV for customer's security. Dimension empathy shows 4.79 of mean value which describe most respondents prefer that self-service laundromats provide Wi-Fi access to their customers.

iii. Result of Regression Analysis

The regression analysis was conducted in order to identify the most influence factor towards customer satisfaction in using self-laundry services in Melaka. The value obtained from the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Findings of Regression Analysis

Variables	R ²	F	Std. Beta	t	Sig
Physical Evidence	.589	42.689	.284	3.264	.001
Reliability			.104	1.163	.246
Responsive			.273	.4811	.000
Assurance			.408	5.091	.000
Empathy			.090	1.092	.277

Note: Independent Variables: Physical Evidence, Reliability, Responsive, Assurance, Empathy; Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction; * $p < .005$; Constant = -.553

The results of the study displayed in Table 3 shows that there is 58.9% ($R^2 = .589$) that affects the quality of service on customer satisfaction. Referring to the regression analysis, the contribution in the significance of the dependent variable; customer satisfaction (Y) is only influenced by three variables which are the assurance dimension, the responsiveness dimension and the physical evidence dimension. Therefore, the research hypothesis to identify if the dimensions of assurance, responsiveness and physical evidence have an influence on customer satisfaction in service quality is accepted. While the dimensions of reliability and empathy do not have a significant influence and do not contribute to customer satisfaction in this study. Therefore, the research hypothesis to identify if the dimensions of assurance, responsiveness and physical form have an influence on customer satisfaction in service quality is rejected.

Based on the BETA analysis in the table above, dimensions of assurance (0.408), is the most influential factors in determining customer satisfaction with service quality in self-service laundries. This can be proven by looking at the significant part of the following dimensions at a value of 0.000 to 0.001 which is lower than 0.05.

Based on the results of this study, regression analysis can be expressed through a linear equation as follows:

$$Y = -0.533 + 0.408 (X1) + 0.273 (X2) + 0.284 (X3)$$

The results of this study show that if one unit of the assurance dimension (X1) increases, then the level of customer satisfaction will also increase by 0.408. Meanwhile, one unit of responsive dimension (X2) increases, then the level of customer satisfaction will also increase by 0.273. Finally, if the dimension of physical form (X3) increases, then the level of customer satisfaction will also increase by 0.284. The results of this study simultaneously support that the dimension of assurance (X1), the dimension of responsiveness (X2) and the dimension of physical form (X3) can influence customer satisfaction (Y).

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the people perceptions (students and staff) of service quality and their influence on satisfaction on the basis of the service offered by self-laundry services located in Melaka. With the results of the study conducted by the researcher, the objective of the study has been set where the purpose is to study the main elements that give a positive perception to the quality of self-service laundry services and to also identify whether the framework of this study has an influence on satisfaction customers who use self-service laundry services. Based on the findings of the study, it was found that one of the main influencing factors in giving a positive perception to the respondents is related to customer safety, where the facility must have CCTV when dealing with self-service laundry services. This statement supports the problem of the study because services that do not require physical treatment with employees will cause many issues such as the theft of clothes (Salim Aziz, 2018; Omar R., 2019; Mohd. Nawi, 2021) or criminal incidents or those that can take lives (Sha, 2018; Fuad, 2020; Dayak Daily, 2021). So with the installation of CCTV at the self-service laundry service premises, it can help in making evidence in the investigation or search for the perpetrators of the crime. This advantage will also reduce the cost of insurance policies as well as lawsuits against service providers and subsequently can create a safe environment for customers who want to use the service.

In order to ensure that an organization can maintain its competitiveness and lead its business, quality factors and customer satisfaction are pillars in the effectiveness and profitability of an organization to continue moving forward. Even with changes in technology and the changing needs and wants of customers, service innovation is one of the alternatives that needs to be explored and utilized. In conclusion, this study provides findings that can be used for the purpose of identifying and further strengthening the ability of self-service laundry services in overcoming negative perceptions and issues that, if seen, can cover the customer's response to the scope of self-service services as a whole. Failure to emphasize the factors of premises equipment and facilities, environmental safety and dexterity in dealing with problems in the service system will lead to a reduction in income and business profits. However, this study still needs to be improved to fully identify the factors that have the most impact on the quality of self-service laundry services. Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest to future researchers to further expand the research framework in identifying if there is a relationship between the 4P marketing mix factors (product or service, price, place and promotion) on customer satisfaction. The addition of these factors will make a basic guide for researchers in knowing if competition between other entrepreneurs in providing services, prices, locations and promotions can affect customer satisfaction.

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