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# FBM INSIGHTS

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA CAWANGAN KEDAH

Volume 2

2020

e-ISSN 2716-599X

UiTM *di hatiku*

eISSN 2716-599X



9 772716 599000

# MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

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## INTRODUCTION

Quality of a service can be understood as a comprehensive customer evaluation of a particular service and the extent to which it meets their expectations and provides satisfaction. It is one of the crucial factors that determines the success of an organization by which the organization needs to integrate all business functions towards meeting every customer's expectations. To achieve these capabilities, the organization must be equipped with criteria and meet certain requirements as a facilitator in improving and maintaining the quality of service. (Berinyuy & Daniel, 2010).

## SERVQUAL MODEL IN MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

Measuring service quality is undeniably vital. Although it's not the same as customer satisfaction, which has its own methods, there's a strong and positive correlation between the two.

In general, measuring service quality varies according to the industry. There are various service quality dimensions that can be applied for this purpose. However, the most widely-used model is SERVQUAL which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985. SERVQUAL is based on a set of five dimensions which have been consistently ranked by customers to be most important for service quality, regardless of service industry. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) developed a SERVQUAL model as illustrated in Figure 1.

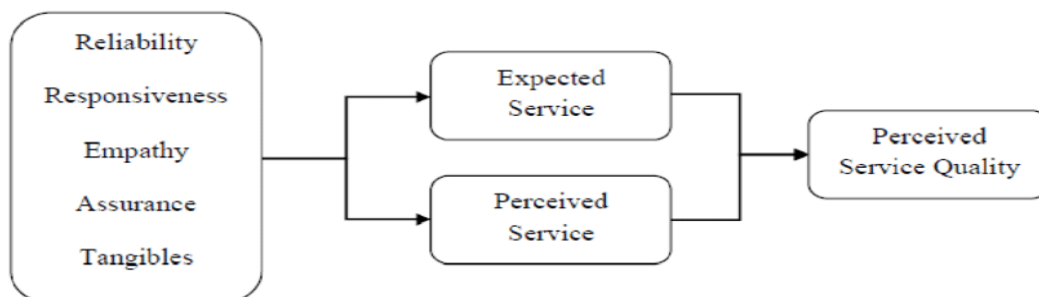


Figure 1: SERVQUAL Model

As mentioned earlier, SERVQUAL Model is applying five dimensions to measure service quality. These dimensions are as follows (Figure 2):

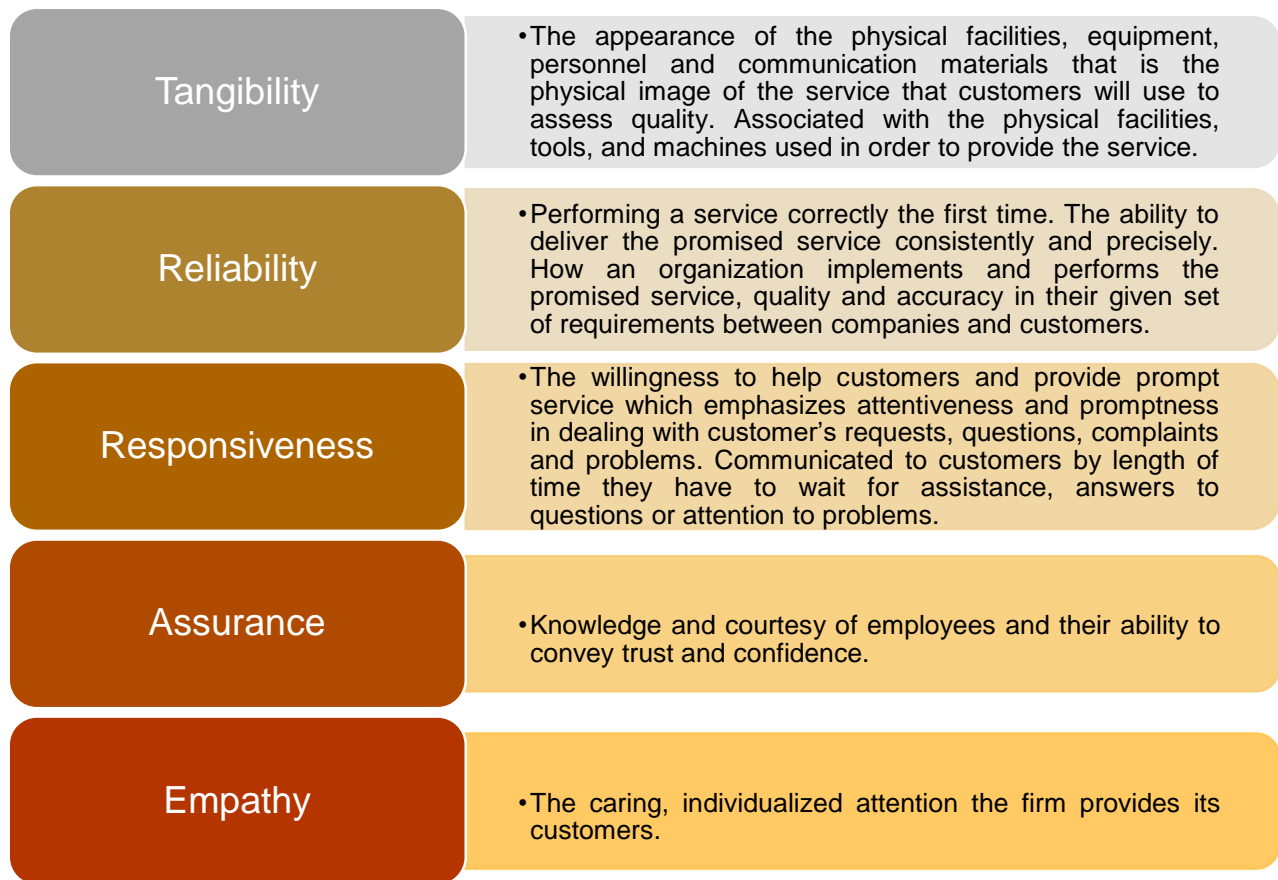


Figure 2: SERVQUAL Dimensions

SERVQUAL is using questionnaires to capture respondents' expectations and perceptions on the five dimensions of service quality. The questionnaire is to be responded in a face-to-face interview and requires a moderate to large size sample for statistical reliability. Due to this, together with a lot of items to be answered, it contributes to substantial costs in administration and data analysis.

Even though SERVQUAL Model is widely used to measure service quality, there are some arguments and critics on this model. First, some researchers argue that measuring the gap between expectation and perception, psychometrically cannot obtain better assessment of service quality. Many academics also had similar arguments that stating that using expectation scale may be a problematic of biased results (Kirubashini & Williams, 2016).

Next argument is on the ambiguity of expectations construct: SERVQUAL is designed to be administered after respondents have experienced a service. They are therefore asked to recall their pre-experience expectations. However, recall is not always accurate, because consumers are continually modifying their expectations as they gain experience with a service.

Lastly, a number of researchers have argued that the research instrument actually captures *satisfaction* rather than *service quality*. Even though service quality is not the same as customer satisfaction, which has its own methods, there's a strong and positive correlation between the two, thus causing confusions (Souca, 2011).

As a conclusion, despite the arguments, SERVQUAL could be inferred as a very subjective and complex model but really useful for companies to improve its services and compete. A business with high service quality will meet or exceed customer expectations, at the same time continuing to be economically competitive.

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