

# Customer Perception and Satisfaction Towards Service Providers

Fredrick Ahenkora Boamah<sup>1\*</sup> Nana Ama Asi Danso<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Aseye Nutakor<sup>3</sup>

1.School of Management Engineering, Zhengzhou University. No. 100 Science Zhengzhou City

2.School of Public Health, University of Ghana. Legon Accra

3.School of Management Engineering, Jiangsu University.301 Xuefu Road, Zhenjiang

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## Abstract

A major factor for customer satisfaction is quality service. Internet services have become more complex and exciting in the context of the global economy than ever. The study aimed at defining the quality of customer service and its effect on customers. The methods of the study made use of the survey method. Thus, the use of quantitative primary data collected from the field. The method of non-probability sampling was also used. 150 respondents in total was used, and all 150 being customers. The 150 respondents was chosen by the use of accidental non-probability sampling. The study showed that the connection between consumer and tangibility satisfaction was statistically significant. The study also showed that the combination of reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy has a major impact on customer satisfaction. Service quality therefore has a positive impact on customer satisfaction. It further stated continues network and connectivity failure recorded the High cost on data, wait long hours before being served, staff inability to support clients were some of the causes of customer dissatisfaction.

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## 1 Introduction

Across the world customers are now posed for quality than any other thing, therefore brings about an increase in quality service as demanded by customers. Service operations worldwide as according to (Lee, 2004), are affected by greater emphasis on awareness. Therefore companies such as the Internet service providers are now obligated to give great work done so as to achieve a higher competitive advantage in this trend of especially in the current trend of trade globalization and liberation (Douglas & Connor, 2003).

DeGarmo & Hurley (2011), also stated that the services sector plays a major role in the economy of every country. The private sector of most developing countries are projected to be a growth hub and the public sector also to serve.

However, in Ghana, the public sector in the past years are obstructed with challenges in the quest to provide quality service delivery. Some of these includes political interference, corruption, political instability, excessive bureaucracy, and nepotism.

The public service is expected to be checked by its effectiveness in service delivery that meets the needs of citizens or customers.

In spite of the criticality, measuring the quality of service constitute obstacles to the service providers, in relation to the uniqueness in the service characteristics: heterogeneity, intangibility, perishability and inseparability (Bateson, 1985) In addition to this, services requires a different and exceptional framework for measuring quality. Among these frameworks is, SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1988) which is the most accepted and used for the measurement of quality in service. According to Parente, Costa, & Leocadio, (2015), the quality of every service delivered by most organizations, leaves a lot to be desired, particularly in Ghana.

Mohammed Nor *et al.*, (2010), stated that, Public sector organizations, accept that customer service is one aspect that is important in contributing to the reputation of the company. Thaichon *et al.*, (2017), also argued that the clients or public complains of the reputation and level of service quality in the public sector can be affected by long queues, inadequate facilities delivery and insufficient physical equipment. Customer service is an integral part of a company's value proposition. Organisations depend on its publics to operate into the predictable future. However, most publics complain about the poor customer care provided by the Internet service providers .

Before 1995, it was alleged that the Internet service providers customer service directorate solely devoted to efficiently handle the public's complaints and enquiries. This brought up a lot of issues as the company was beset with a problem like wrong meter readings, outrageous bills, delays in attending to faults, wrongful disconnections and generally poor customer service.

It was in this light that the providers established the Customer Service Directorate (CSD). It is, therefore, relevant to access whether customer service directorate has played its role in enhancing quality service delivery after twenty-one years.

## 1.1 Aim And Objectives Of The Study

The aim of the study is to identify the effectiveness of customer care and impact on customers: the following targets have been set in order to achieve this aim:

1. Identify factors that cause customers dissatisfaction.
2. To determine the gap between customer perception and expectation regarding the quality of service.

## 2.Literature Review

### 2.1 The Quality Concept

Babakus and Boller (1992) said quality is known to be a tool, which is strategically used in achieving efficiency in operations and an improve performance in organisation. (Anderson and Zeithaml 1984). It is sometimes said that the definition of quality is the one from those that have a need for any service or product. All products have different consumers and they all have different meanings to quality (Philips et al 1983).

According to Lovelock and Wirtz, (2004), quality is more than what we see and feel but it is a performance of delivery, changes in the market and environment at the lowest possible cost.

Bonsu and Mensah (2013) also stated that Quality from ages have been a tool for defense but also seen as a competitive avenue for new market, (Davis et al, 2003).

#### 2.1.1 Quality Meaning

##### 2.1.1.0 Product or Service

According to (Wille, 1992), BS 4778 (British standard) states that, entirety of the characteristics with its features of a commodity or product has the capacity to satisfy any need. Every industry or sector, needs to identify a problem and to produce a solution with the aim of solving it and once the problem is solved, the said organisation is branded as a quality organisation.

##### 2.1.1.1 Customer Delighted

According to Dauda & Lee, (2016) quality is the delighting of every consumer or customer by regularly improving on what has been agreed. Khare, (2010). also argued that excellence never ends therefore, good is not the best, until the best is achieved.

Firms, institutions or organizations should upgrade so as to meet their customers demand and expectations. Whenever a customer is happy and satisfied, the tendency of leaving is very low.

## 2.2 Service Quality Overview

The service industry has a major role in playing in every economy. The public sector in developing counties like Ghana have very crucial roles with reference to delivery of quality services.

Customer expectations changes when government interferes in the requirement of quality. Gowan et al (2001) made emphasis on the provision of service as more complicate in the public sector because of its bureaucracy.

### 2.2.1 Quality Service Concept

The quality service concept was developed from the behavior of the customer and confirmation paradigm (Peppers & Rogers, 2004). This maintains that, there is always a comparison of the product after it's used and expectations before use or usage by customers (Kumar et al., 2010), also stated by (Terrizzano *et al.*, 2012)

Service Features

Ica (2010) stated some service features below:

#### I. Intangibility

This is said to be the principal attribute of service. Most organizations face difficulties in understanding customers consideration and the evaluation of services rendered.

#### II. Inseparability

Physical goods and services has a special grade in relation to productions. Services are produced, sold and consumed. Firstly, goods are produced, reserved, sold and finally consumed.924 7526

#### III. Perishability

Services in its own context cannot be kept for later use. Therefore, is supply exceeds demand there is surplus and that brings about perishability.

## 2.3 Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

### 2.3.1 Customer Satisfaction

One of the key aspects of marketing is customer service, Amiri and Faghani (2012). In today's working environment, the satisfaction of customers is considered as a success story. Researchers in marketing mostly have agreed to the fact that, satisfaction is a tool for consumption. According to Sulieman (2013) satisfied customers broadcast to others about their experiences. He further stated that the basic role of production is to satisfy its clients. Anderson et al (1994), also said, the satisfaction of a client or customer leads to profitability of the producer.

According to Mehta (2000), the model for customer satisfaction reiterates the essence of the customer in comparing their judgement of the products and the performance of services with the expectations. Bitner *et al.*,

(2010) also indicated any negativity between the expectation and performance brings about disconfirmation. He further stated some as:

- i. **Positive disconfirmation**, which happens when services performance exceeds expectations. Which means the customer is satisfied.
- ii. **Negative disconfirmation**: this also happens when services performance is below expectation and explains that the customers are highly dissatisfied
- iii. **Zero disconfirmation**, this occurs if performance is the same to expectation. This is the scenario where the customer is just satisfied

There are different components of satisfaction, but Giese and Cote (2000) explained some as;

Customer satisfaction is the feedback given by the customer through emotions, that stress on a product after experiencing it or consuming.

Kotler (2000), said, satisfaction was claimed to be a person's pleasure feelings as a results of comparison of different products or service's outcome in relation to their expectations.

## 2.4 Excellence In Customer Service

The ability of an organization in supplying the wants and needs of its customers is known as customer service (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

*Excellence in customer service is the ability of an organisation in exceeding the expectations of the customer.*

There is always the need for continuous learning and the development of strategic plans if an organization wants to improve customer services. It is believed that internet users or internet customers are demanding and wants value for their money spent (Lau *et al.*, 2013).

Models For Measurement (SERVQUAL, SERVPERF and BSQ MODELS)

### 2.4.1 SERVQUAL Model

Parasuraman, et al. 1988, are the originators of the model. According to their main aim for coming out with this model was to establish a reliable and respected tool to be used for measuring the quality of service in different service sectors. In their 1988 article, they stated the dimensions to be;

Tangibles,

- i. Reliability,
- ii. Responsiveness,
- iii. Assurance and
- iv. Empathy.
- v. **Tangibility**: this includes but not limited to equipment, physical materials, physical facilities and personnel appearance.
- i. **Reliability**: this is said to be the highest in determining service quality perception and also the means of accuracy in terms service dependency which may include pricing, delivery and provision.
- ii. **Responsiveness**: Is the ability in providing services promptly to customers. This dimension pays more attention to the request, problems and questions of customers and dealing with them promptly. This is all about the speed in dealing with issues.
- iii. **Assurance**: This area is seen when the customer sees uncertainty or risk in evaluating outcomes. Confidence, loyalty and trust should be the hall mark of the company.
- iv. **Empathy**: caring and attention given to customers by firms.

### 2.4.2 SERVPERF Model

In 1992, Cronin and Taylor opposed the conceptualisation of service quality by Parasuraman et al (1988). But Cronin et al (1992) recommended amending the SERVQUAL expectation section. They further claimed that only the output aspect could predict the behavioral intentions, and thus created their model and called it SERVPERF, meaning service efficiency.

### 2.4.3 BSQ Model

Bahia and Nantel (2000) carried out further work to establish a legal measure of established quality of services in the Canadian retail market. They claimed the SERVQUAL method wasn't without criticism, and thus inspired them to invent a new service quality measurement. There was a recommendation for a scale named as the BANK SERVICE QUALITY (BSQ). This contains 31 objects categorized in six (6) sections:

- i. Effectiveness
- ii. price
- iii. access,
- iv. tangibles,
- v. Accuracy and
- vi. reliability.

The BSQ dimensions have proved more robust than the SERVQUAL. Many studies including Angur et al. (1999), however, finds SERVQUAL to be the best indicator.

## 2.5 Perception

The service quality and customer service concept greatly are greatly influenced by perception. When knowledge is in place, it is very helpful to talk about the sensation concept. Weiten, (1994) indicated that the mechanism through which certain human cells such as the eyes, nose, ears and skin surfaces transmit nerve signals or just trigger these organisms into the brain.

(Wortman et al 1992) also stated perception as the process by which the brain understands sensation it receives. Or as simple as the process of obtaining information around us.

### 2.5.1 Factors Affecting Perception

It is of great importance to take note of the sensory effect on perception The development of perception also includes various components, including perceptions, motivation, character and lifestyles.

#### i. Expectation

A fact was brought out by Wortman et al (1992), stating experience and learning sharpens our expectations and that also makes an influence on our perception. They explained further that our knowing and remembrance helps also in our perception.

#### ii. Motivation

This has also been stated as the factors that brings driftings to our behaviour by sustaining and directing towards goals attainment. (Maslow, 1954). He further brought out the hierarchy of needs.

#### iii. Expectancy Value Models

Purpose-value models are part of the theory of motivation. This further describes the inspiration by taking into account both the purpose and the meaning of achievement.

#### iv. Attitude

Psychologists are of the believe that every individuals interpretation of social events and their response as related by attitude (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991) as well as the first impression also tends to influence attitudes. An example is made on a client been treated nicely for the first time of appearance, gives the client the go ahead to do business with you always

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study confirms and examines the consistency of the services rendered by Internet service providers. SERVQUAL model is mostly used in assessing service efficiency and service customer expectations. The SERVQUAL model comprises five indicators: tangibility, reactivity, efficiency, reliability, and empathy. When preferences surpass the expectations of customers, they are fulfilled and customers are likely to be retained by ISP. Whenever, the efficiency of the service is below customer service standards, consumers will not be satisfied and they won't have the choice but to use other alternative.

Whenever a service provider has the strongest infrastructure, no poor delivery and no delays, staff that take customers into account and are very close to them, therefore superior service efficiency would result in satisfaction of customers.

The general idea of this literature is the customer satisfaction partnership and quality of service. The service quality can also be measured using 5 parameters of service quality, and the most popular and accessible dimension is the SERVQUAL scale. Consumers in this study are those who access the services, while the rewards received by customers for the services provided by organizational employees are customer satisfaction in this study.

(Ziethaml *et al.*, 2006), proved that “perceived service quality is a component of customer satisfaction. However the SERVQUAL model has from the past been ticked, tried and tested as the best model for measuring service quality, especially from the customer's perspective.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The survey method will be the research design to be used for this study. The systematic way of collecting data is the survey method. It therefore includes the use of questionnaires to gather information from selected population. By using the method of surveying, the researcher gathered respondents from certain departments and those who enter into transactions and also interviewed them to obtain their views on the service level they get from the organization and to recommend any changes to this effect.

### 3.2 Area Of Study

The institution for this study is Vodafone Ghana and the branch been circle branch. The area chosen for this study therefore was the Central Business district of Accra in the Greater Accra region of Ghana.

This study will be concentrated on both the customers and the management team. Based on the category of people it can be deduced that respondents will be from different cultural, economic and educational background with different basic ideas and orientations. It is therefore important to assume that the respondents will have different opinions on the subject matter.

### 3.3 Sampling Method

The population for this study is customers and in the various department, been it, prepaid department, postpaid department, enquires department, sales department.

It can be clearly stated that for the population identified for the analysis a sample structure can not be obtained. In view of this, the method of non probability sampling was used. 150 respondents in total was used, and all 150 being customers. The 150 respondents was chosen by the use of accidental non-probability sampling. This is one in which the researchers have the opportunity to interview respondents as and when they come in contact with them. This involves a critical attention and time consuming because the researcher needs to be close to the place in question or understudy. In this case, a total of one hundred and fifty (150) was picked by the use of the accidental sampling method in the operations area of Vodafone Ghana, circle branch.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods and Research Instrument

The technique used in this study is the use of standardized questionnaires to request data. The questionnaire is considered as the best instrument for information gathering, since it has been easily coded and evaluated for both open and close questions. In general, communicating with a significant number of people will be much simpler in a short period of time.

## 4.0 Results And Discussions

### 4.1 Factors that cause dissatisfaction

The research aimed at investigating factors causing frustration among the customers when operating with Vodafone, the Branch Circle. From the table below it was identified that a variety of responses were given as factors leading to insecurity.

Table 4.1: Factors that cause dissatisfaction

	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Staff inability to support clients	15	6.0
High cost on data usage	20	10.7
Wait long hours before being served	10	6.3
Continues network and connectivity failure	105	77.0
Total	150	100

Source: Field data

With the above frequencies, Continues network and connectivity failure recorded the highest with a percentage of 77%, which in other words, when all network connectivity are fixed and technicians are on standby, it will help solve about 77% of customer dissatisfying. A question may be posed as what causes High cost on prepaid, when this is identified, a section of customers will be satisfied because with reference to the data collected, it recorded 10.7%. Other factors like wait long hours before being served recorded 6.3% staff inability to support clients also recorded 6.0%.

### 4.2 Customer Expectation And Perception

This portion is to measure the gap between the perception of customers (P) and customer expectation (E)

Perceptions minus Expectations, was used in finding the gap scores because of the fact that service quality totally depends on the perceived product performance in relation to the expectations of buyers. Expectations, gap and perception scores for each has been stated.

Therefore, in the event  $E > P$ , the customer gets unsatisfied and  $E < P$  the customer gets satisfied as indicated by Parasuraman et al. (1999) under the Expectation Deconfirmation scheme. The survey included the scale capable of measuring perceived quality of service at vodafone, circle branch.

This scale measures the expectations of the respondent with regard to what the branch has to deliver and its opinion of what the branch currently provides and this is to be made for every item indicated, namely Tangibles, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness and Empathy. A five-point scale from (1) =strongly agree; (2) = agree; (3) = indifferent; (4) = disagree; to (5) = strongly disagree, was used in measuring expectations and perceptions. Lewis and Mitchell (1990) used this approach in their study.

It can be stated clearly that, the study was focused as to whether or not a difference exists between the customer's views and expectations. The t-test was used to evaluate the scores of respondents on the measures of



standards and impressions at a confidence level of 99 per cent. Tangible, Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance and empathic were the elements assessed. The t-test score is discussed below for each item measured based on expectations and perceptions.

### Tangibles

Table 4.2: The Tangibles results

Tangibles	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Df	t-test	P
Perception	19.0	150	3.343	149	8.704	<0.01
Expectation	21.53	150	3.51			

Source: Field data

The average customer expectancy is higher than what they receive from ISP. The difference of mean in the scores was -2.53. The recurrent t-test with the comparison showed that the customer expectations are different from the actual Vodafone receipts, as statistically indicated as: [(df = 149) = 8.704, P<.001]. This brings to the reality that Tangible requirements of the respondents were not fulfilled. This resulted in a negative difference in the mean values. The findings for Tangibles can be noticed that are very similar in meeting the customer's expectations. The gap is -2.53. This can be indicated as, that Vodafone accomplished in terms of tangibles and a little more needs to be done to close that gap.

### Reliability

Table 4.3: The reliability scores

Reliability	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Df	t-test	P
Perception	15.970	150	3.694	149	11.698	<0.01
Expectation	19.471	150	3.110			

Source: Field data

Repeated test results showed also a significant mean difference in the reliability measure between the customer's perception and expectations. The score on the perception for Reliability compared to the client's mean was 15.97 and the expectations for Reliability was also 19.471.

And that can be established that the mean difference is -3.501. Hence customer expectations are much lower than reality. [ t [df= 149]= 11.698, P<.001]. It can also be stated that, each clients expectation is less than what their service providers would like to give. Therefore, statistically there was an important difference between expectations and perceptions (-3.501), which implies that customers were not satisfy in terms of reliability.

### Responsiveness

Table 4.4: The responsiveness results

Responsiveness	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Df	t-test	P
Perception	16.620	150	3.920	149	15.292	<0.01
Expectation	21.737	150	3.184			

Source : Field data

Among Vodafone staff, the mean score was 16.620 and customer expectations in the same quality of service category were 21.737. A significant difference was found by the repeated t-test in the nature of the clients to perceive staff responsiveness towards the delivery of service and the actually exists for them. As indicated above, a negative gap of (-5.117) was recorded, that indicates, the expectations of customers are not met. The results are the following: [t(df= 149)= 15.292, P <.001]. The above means that the average customer expectancy score is higher than its average expectation assessment score. Furthermore, it demonstrates that workers are very pleasant and respected in regards to help customers with fast service in problem solving. vodafone employees must respond to problems with the willingness to support customers and in pace.

### Assurance

Table 4.5: Assurance test score

Assurance	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Df	t-test	P
Perception	14.97	150	12.104	149	11.896	<0.01
Expectation	29.99	150	11.677			

Source: Field data

The tests were also used to assess if the customer's standards are met in reference to the reliability aspect of service quality. Result showed a major difference in the quality of service indicator between the expectation (29.99)

and perception (14.97)[ t (df= 149)= 11.896, p<.001].

This can be described as the aspirations of clients or consumers surpass what happens in the utility service when it comes to Assurance There was a difference of (-15.02) between that and what coexists with ECG and the customers ' expectations are statistically significant. With regard to the service delivery element of Assurance, customers see Vodafone as doing quite well in relation to product and service awareness and having a strong security system to make customers feel very safe. Vodafone can do more than the existing ones.

### Empathy

Table 4.6: Empathy test score

Empathy	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Df	t-test	P
Perception	22.3	150	5.083	149	12.765	<0.01
Expectation	28.6	150	4.688			

Source: Field data

The experiments showed a significant difference in the mean outcomes of respondents ' attitudes and expectations based on empathy measures such as :[(df=149)=12.765, P<.001 ].Customers perciveness of empathy from the internet service provider (Vodafone) is 22.3 but their expectation was 28.6 which indicates a difference in negative of (-6.3). This can therefore be finalized that the expectation of the customer on empathy are not being met.

Customers have the expectation that ISP should provide products that best suit their needs.

### 5.0 Conclusion

This study was done in order to identify the effectiveness of customer care and impact on customers by the Internet service providers (ISP) and the case study of Vodafone Ghana. Before the aim could be relised, objectives were set.

#### Objective 1: Identify factors that cause customers dissatisfaction:

From the data, it can be indicated that, respondents have knowledge about their needs and what they expect. Although the service providers are providing their value and services, respondents or customers also in some way are dissatisfied with their services. Out of the many factors gathered, the four most factors were some factors were continues network and connectivity failure, High cost on data usage, Wait long hours before being served and staff inability to support clients. The results also indicated that, when these factors are resolved, customers will be happy and satisfied.

#### Objective 2: To determine the gap between customer perception and expectation regarding the quality of service.

The assessment of the difference between consumer understanding (P) and customer expectation (E) accomplished this objective. Perceptions minus expectations were used to describe the gap because service quality depends entirely on perceived output of the company with relation to the expectations of the customers. For every item Mearsures had to be made. In other words:Tangibles, Responsiveness, Empathy and Assurance It can also be stated for reliability that each client's demand is lower than what their service providers want to provide.

In actual fact, there was a significant statistical difference between perception and expectation (-3.51), indicating that expectations about reliability are not met. For responsiveness, on the measure of expectation the mean score for the expectation of the client is greater than its mean score. It also brings to the point that the attitude of the workers about willingness to assist clients and accelerate service provision in the resolution is very attractive and appreciated and for empathy, therefore be concluded that the expectation of the customer on empathy are not being met.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST':** The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest'.

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