

Measuring Customers Perceptions of Service Quality (SERVQUAL) Towards TOM N TOM Coffee Shop, In Phaya Thai Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract: This study aims to measuring customer perceptions of service quality towards TOM N TOMS coffee shop by conducting a GAP analysis to access the GAP between customer expectations and perceptions. TOM N TOMS Coffee Shops are located in the metropolitan City of Bangkok and a veteran of the Bangkok coffee drinking scene. TOM N TOMS coffee shops still feels new and exciting, the shops has a cool, laid-back vibe, attracting a young international crowd especially the Europeans like to sit back and relax and enjoy the coffee cultures like in their home countries. The shop on Phaya Thai Road in on A LA ART building muted colour scheme, the coffee shop which has a cool vibrant colours in the exterior and interior is irresistibly nice at the night time. This research is to find out the expectation levels of services at TOM N TOMS coffee shop on Phaya Thai road in customer's mind. Also, to identify the problem areas regarding service quality issues at TOM N TOMS coffee shop.

The SERVQUAL instrument itself is discussed, and a demonstration of how it can be used by TOM N TOMS coffee shop in assessing quality service is included. The managerial implications of using SERVQUAL as an assessment tool include meeting and managing customer expectations, managing the physical design of the product, educating service customers, developing a total quality management program, achieving continuous quality through automation, and engaging in periodic review of the procedures, personnel, and property of the operation. With the assessment knowledge generated by such a review, Eat ME restaurant may then begin to manage their strengths and weaknesses productively.

The survey research via questionnaire was used to collect the primary data. The target population of this research was customers who prior experience with TOM N TOMS Coffee shop, Central Town of Bangkok that was the location for studying in this research and the sample size for this study is 300.

In this research, the five SERVQUAL dimensions – reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness were used to measure customer expectations and perceptions on the service quality of TOM N TOMS coffee shop. From this study, the restaurant's service performance exceeded customer expectations in all five dimensions. Service quality is an important key for business success because it provides a lot of benefits, the customers of TOM N TOMS coffee shop did perceive the services delivered from the restaurant as they expected.

Keywords: Service quality (SERVQUAL), Customer perceptions, Coffee Shop.

I. INTRODUCTION

The service sector plays an increasingly important role in current global economies. It contributed 80 percent of the 2002 Gross National Product (CIA World Fact Book, 2003) and accounts for nearly 80 percent of the US workforce (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2004). As attention is being focused more and more on this sector, it becomes more competitive over time. To be competitive in today's business, a service firm should have an effective indicator to measure its business performance. While the sales volume is criticized as a lagging indicator which provides very little information about its effect on firm performance, purchase intention is an alternative performance indicator to explore the likelihood that customers will purchase services of a firm before the actual purchase is made (Balduaf et al, 2003). Moreover, a

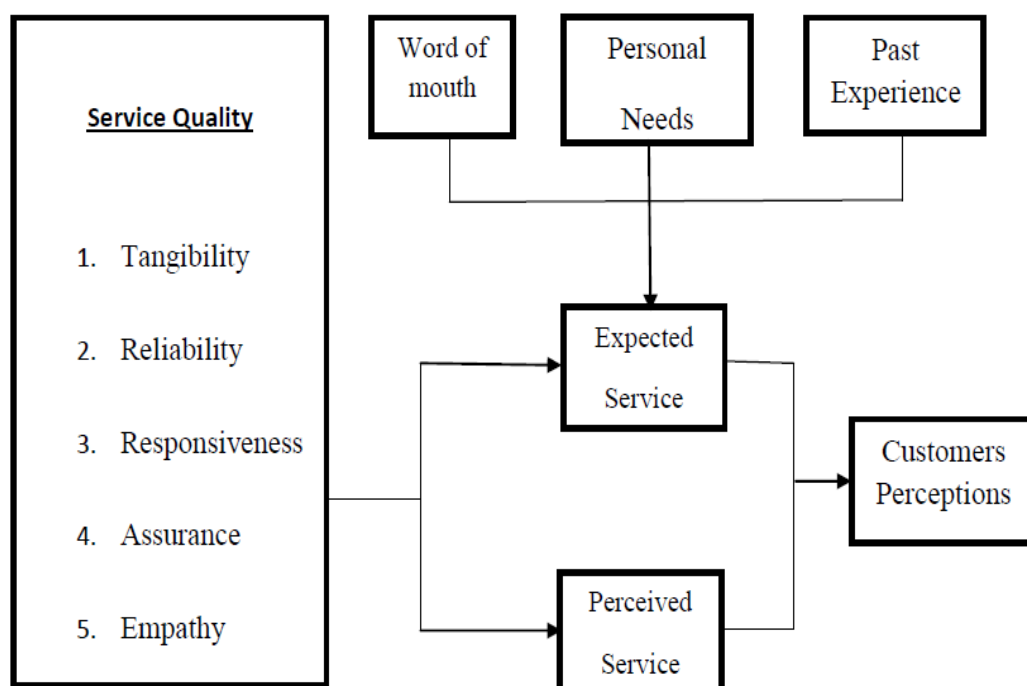
service firm that clearly understands the decision making process of its customers would be able to optimize its marketing strategies and, in turn, gain more competitive advantage than its competitors (Colias, 2005). Therefore, consumer perception and intention to select a service firm has been of interest for years (Richarme, 2005). It is undoubtedly true for a service industry, that quality of service directly affects service evaluation and selection. However, other factors are also considered as having an influence on service selection. Woodall (2003) suggested that service quality together with physical attributes of the product, price, and brand are associated with the product acquisition while Dodds et al., (1991) indicated that a brand is strongly related to the evaluations of the product in quality judgment, price evaluation, value interpretation, and, consequently, purchase probability (Stader and Shaw, 1999; Donthu, 1999).

TOM N TOM coffee shops as part of many chains across Bangkok that targets students and working people in areas of Bangkok by offering a variety of coffee, coffee free drinks and snacks, it's menu of drinks fuses influences from around the world, drinks are characterized by 50 daring flavour combinations, which showcase an external influence of western coffee drinkers in Bangkok such as beverages , bakery product and merchandize with reasonable price to customers, and realizes in the importance service quality to meet customers' expectations. The coffee shop has an estimated customers of 6,000 people per month, or 200 people per day.

The purpose of this project is to examine the applicability of a previously established instrument for measuring service quality (SERVQUAL) in assessing customer perceptions of service quality towards TOM N TOMS coffee shop in Phaya Thai Area of Bangkok.

This research studies the customer perceptions towards service quality of TOM N TOMS coffee shop in view of an interesting case study that can use the results obtained for a service development and improvement in the future.

Conceptual Framework:



Source: (Gronroos 1982, and Lehtinen 1982) A conceptual model of Service Quality and it's implication for future research (SERVQUAL)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Coffee is one of agriculture product which generates great income for Thailand. There are two main areas growing coffee in the kingdom, southern and northern. Robusta coffee in grown mainly the south where 80,000 t are produced annually. Only 500 t of Arabica coffee (C. Arabica) are produced in the north. Present cultivation techniques are focused on producing high yields. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are commonly applied to the coffee plantations. Thailand exports 60,000 t of Robusta coffee, while 20,000 t are used for soluble, roasted, ground, and canned coffee in the domestic market. Arabica coffee is mainly used for roasted and ground coffee in Thailand. Arabica coffee is mainly grown in the highlands at approx. 800m. It is wet processed to give high quality green bean.

2.1. Customer Expectations of Service:

Customer expectations are beliefs of an individual about service performance before they receive the actual service delivery (Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 81). In evaluating service quality, it is a comparison of customer's expectation with the actual performance of service, and the difference between customer expectations and perceptions of service is the "customer gap" in which a firm needs to close that gap (Bateson, 1995, P. 559; Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 33).

2.2. Customer Perceptions of Service:

Perception is an individual's attitudes after they have received services (Reid & Bojanic, 2001, P. 73). Customers perceive a service in both terms of the quality of service and satisfaction, and perceptions of customers always relate to their expectations and experiences (Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 106). Customer satisfaction is linked to customer perception of value in terms of product quality, service quality, and competitive price (Naumann & Giel, 1995, P. 5; Robert, 1993, P. 84; Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 110), as well as corporate image (Naumann & Giel, 1995, P. 218). Customer satisfaction occurs when a firm's service meets or exceeds customer expectations (Reid & Bojanic, 2001, P. 39).

2.3. Services Quality:

The success of a service firm comes from respect to service quality that leads to satisfaction of customers (Bateson, 1995, P. 581). Service quality is an important factor in customer evaluation and determining customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al. 2006, P. 116).

2.4. Definition of Service Quality:

Although the two concepts in terms of quality and satisfaction based on customers' perceptions are interchangeable, they are not the same thing (Lovelock & Wright, 1999, P. 92; Zeithaml et al. 2006, P. 106). Service quality is customer's perceptions about quality based on long-term and overall evaluation of performance (Lovelock & Wright, 1999, P. 92; Reid & Bojanic, 2001, P. 39; Zeithaml et al. 2006, P. 106). On the contrary, satisfaction is the customer's evaluation of a product or service in terms of whether that service or product has met the customer needs and expectations (Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 110).

3. METHODOLOGY

The American Marketing Association defined marketing research as "the function which links the consumer, customer and public to marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process" (as cited in Parasuraman et al., 2004, P. 8).

Research is a key tool for finding what customers want and how to satisfy their needs (Zikmund, 1997, P. 55) including understanding consumer expectations and perceptions of goods and services (Bateson, 1995, P. 558; Zeithaml et al., 2006, P. 142) and linking consumer to marketer in making marketing decisions (Burns & Bush, 2005, P. 8).

3.1. Research Methods:

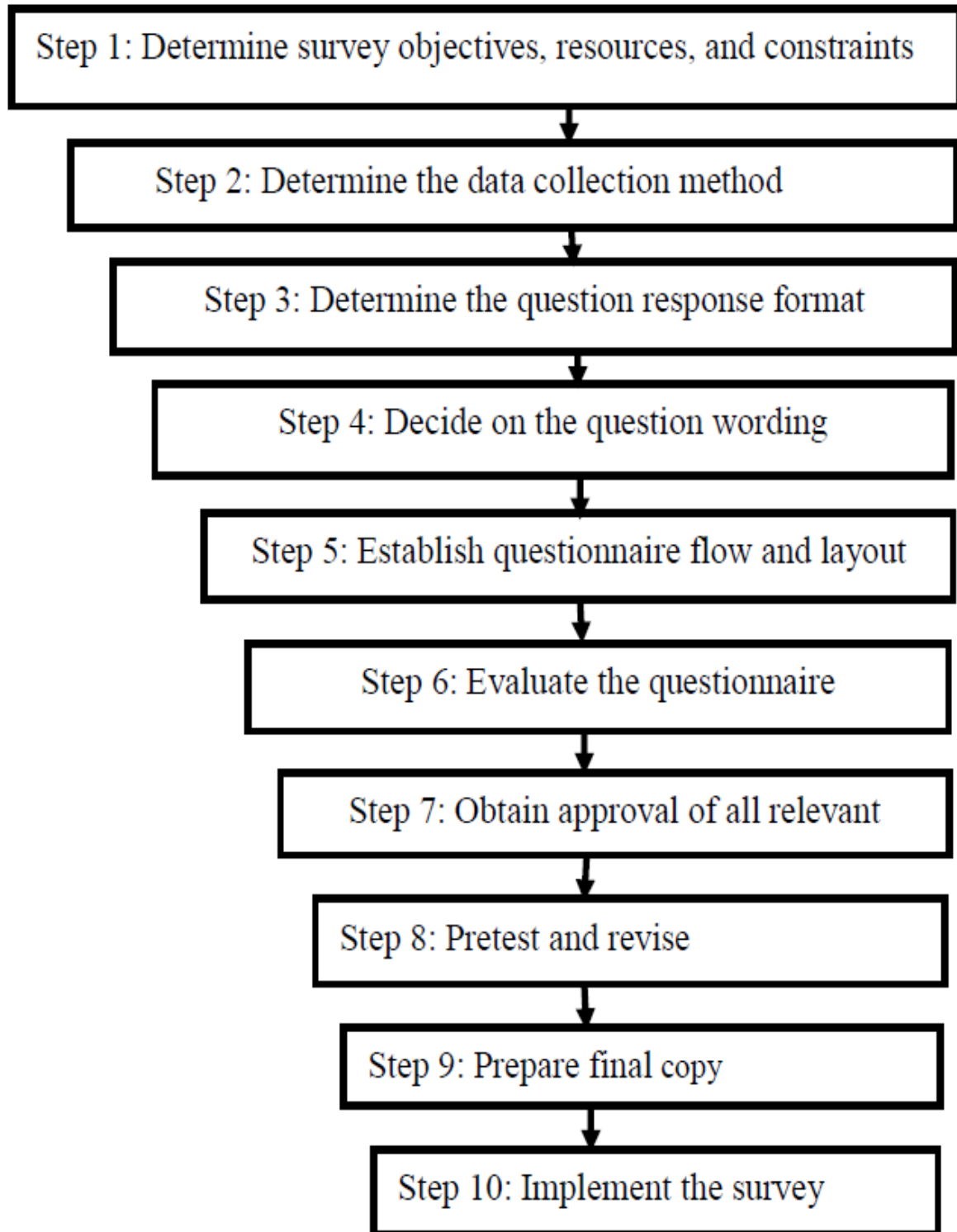
Research design is the plan to be followed to answer the problems or objectives of the research by selecting a basic research method (McDaniel & Gates, 2004). There are three main types of research designs: "Exploratory research" is informal research that does not have a formal set of objectives, sample plan, or questionnaire, to gain background information, define terms and clarify problems, and help in designing the descriptive or causal research study; "Descriptive research" is used to describe answers to questions of who, what, where, when and how in order to measure a marketing phenomenon, for example use a survey method that is the most common research technique in gathering primary data from a sample of people through a questionnaire; "Causal research" is an understanding of a phenomenon in terms of conditional statements, for example, use experiments to find out cause-and-effect relationships among variables (McDaniel & Gates, 2004).

3.2. Survey design and development:

After the research design and the sampling plan have been created, the next process is collecting data. There are many research techniques involving many methods of data gathering such as by personal and telephone interviewing, mail survey

and self-administered questionnaire that filled out by respondents with no interviewer present (McDaniel & Gates, 2004)

The survey will be designed after specified the research problems and questions in the research, and designing and developing the survey must be related to the goals of the research (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Figure 3.3. shows the questionnaire design process: the first step begins with determine survey objectives, resources, and constraints; determine the data collection method; determine the question response format; decide on the question wording; establish questionnaire flow and layout; evaluate the questionnaire; obtain approval of all relevant parties; pretest and revise; prepare final copy; and implement the survey at the final stage.



Source: McDaniel & Gates, (2004, P. 241)

4. DATA FINDINGS

Table 4.1 shows the data results that present the participants' information collected from the survey.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	150	52.63
	Female	135	47.36
	Total	285	100.00
Age	Under 25	75	26.31
	26 - 39	130	45.61
	40 - 49	53	18.59
	More than 50	30	10.52
	Total	285	100.00
Occupation	Student	50	17.54
	Employee of private company	140	49.12
	Government Employee	26	9.12
	Entrepreneur	65	22.80
	Others	4	1.40
	Total	285	100.00
Income per month (Baht)	Below 15,000	86	30.17
	15,001-30,000	100	35.08
	30,001-50,000	59	20.70
	More than 50,000	40	14.03
	Total	285	100.00

4.2. Comparison between Expectation and Perception Scores – GAP5:

GAP 5 or customer gap is the different customers' expectations and customers' perception of service (Bateson, 1995, P. 559). Based on Parasuraman (1988) to measure the gap between the mean of five perception dimensions scores and five expectations dimensions scores, the SERVQUAL score formula was calculated on $(P - E = SQ)$. Table 4.2 presents the Gap between expectation and perception scores on each dimension.

Table 4.2

Dimensions	Expectation Scores	Perception Scores	Paired Differences	Rank
Reliability	6.00	4.82	-1.18	1
Assurance	5.65	4.66	-0.99	4
Tangible	5.60	4.80	-0.80	5
Empathy	5.71	4.65	-1.06	3
Responsiveness	5.79	4.64	-1.15	2

Source: Survey in November, 2015

4.2.1 Data Analysis:

The analysis of the data findings which is based upon the data presentation presented are the data that will be presented here to answer the questions of the research.

4.2.2 Data Analysis from Expectation Scores:

From Table 4.2, E1 to E22 represent the expectation ID of five service dimensions. The results showed expectation scores on each of twenty-two items. Mean of expectation score were high at 5.36 to 6.31. It implied that customers had high expectation in all service dimensions, and they viewed that all five dimensions were quite important in their perception of an excellent coffee shop service quality.

To compare the expectation mean scores of five service dimensions, this research ranked the mean of dimension respectively; the highest score was ranked at 1 and the lowest score was ranked at 5. The results are as follows;

4.2.3 Highest expectation scores on Reliability and Responsiveness:

From Table 4.2, Reliability has the highest mean expectation score (6.00) among the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Customers view that Reliability is the most important. In other words, they had high expectation in an excellent restaurant's performance to perform the promised service accurately. Customers want the coffee shop to do and keep their promises. E4 is the highest expectation score (6.31) that implied customers highly expected an excellent restaurant to well provide fresh and clean raw materials and serve high quality of coffee as their promised. Customers expected the cafe to perform service right the first time, such as bill collecting at the cafe must be always right. Also, they want the cafe to show a sincere interest to solve their problems. The cafe needs to be aware of customer expectations of reliability.

Responsiveness is the second highest mean expectation score (5.79) among the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Customers had high expectation in prompt services. They wanted an excellent cafés employees have willingness to help as well as ready to response to their requests. The cafe must emphasize promptness in dealing with customer's requests, questions, complaints and problems.

4.2.4 Medium expectation scores on Empathy and Assurance:

From Table 4.2, Empathy dimension has mean expectation score at 5.71 and Assurance dimension has mean expectation score at 5.65 which are in medium expectation scores. For Empathy dimension, customers had high expectation in employees at an excellent cafe to understand their needs, and give them personal attention. They expect the cafe to have sincere and attentive employees. They want the cafe operating hours that are suitable and convenient. Also, they expect some unique and extra services, such as the special promotion of premium coffee to meet their needs and preferences.

For Assurance dimension, customers had high expectation in the courtesy of an excellent café employees. They expect to feel safe in transactions with the cafe. They also had high expectation in competence of the cafes employees such as skills and knowledge to perform services and to answer their questions.

4.2.5 Lowest expectation scores on Tangible:

From Table 4.2, Tangible has the lowest mean expectation score among the five SERVQUAL dimensions, but the expectation score of Tangible dimension (5.60) was high that implied customers also had expectation in the appearance of personnel in neat and professional. Customers expect the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and communication materials. They want the restaurant to have a good physical environment, such as fascinating food presentation, including nice and comfortable seating. Also, customers want the café to have appealing materials associated with services.

4.2.6 Data Analysis from Perception Scores:

From Table 4.2, P1 to P22 represent the perception ID of five service dimensions. The results showed perception scores on each of twenty-two items. Mean perception scores were among 4.64 and 4.82. The highest score were P1 (4.88), which is TOM N TOM coffee shops show a sincere interest when a customer have a problem, and P14 (4.88) that is the restaurant has a special menu of premium and rare foods that are appealing.

To compare the perception mean scores of five service dimensions, this research ranked the mean of dimension respectively; the highest score was ranked at 1 and the lowest score was ranked at 5. The results are as follows;

4.2.7 Highest perception scores on Reliability and Tangible:

From Table 4.2, Reliability is the highest perception score (4.82) among five service dimensions. Regarding to Reliability dimension, it implied that customer perceived that TOM N TOMS coffee shops perform service accurately, such as accuracy in billing. Also, customers thought the restaurant served high quality of foods and provided good quality of raw materials.

From Table 4.2, Tangible is the second highest perception score (4.80) among five service dimensions. Regarding to Tangible dimension, it implied that customers perceived that physical environment TOM N TOMS coffee shops are appealing for example, the café had a fascinating food presentation, a nice and comfortable seating, and appealing materials. The appearance of employees at the restaurant was neat and professional.

4.2.8. Medium perception scores on Assurance and Empathy:

From Table 4.2, Assurance dimension is in the medium perception score (4.66). It implied customers thought that TOM N TOMS coffee shops employees are consistently courteous with them. The restaurant made them feel safe in transactions. Also, employees at the restaurant had the knowledge to perform service and answer their questions.

From Table 4.2, Empathy dimension is in the medium perception score (4.65). Customers thought that TOM N TOMS coffee shops employees understand their needs, and give them personal attention. They thought that the restaurant had sincere and attentive employees, and provided them some extra services, such as the special promotion of premium and rare foods to meet their needs. Also, the café operating hours are suitable and convenient.

4.2.9 Lowest perception scores on Responsiveness:

From Table 4.2, Responsiveness dimension is in the lowest perception score (4.64). It implied customers perceived that TOM N TOMS coffee shops employees were unable to meet customer requirement in providing prompt services. Also, the restaurant's employees were lack of willingness to help customers, as well as too busy to response to their requests.

4.2.10 the Gap between Expectation and Perception Scores:

Service quality is a comparison between expectation and performance of the service provider to measure of how well a service delivered match customer's expectations. Gap 5 is the gap between the expected service and the perceived service. Parasuraman (1988) mentioned when ($P = E$), perceived quality is satisfaction, but when ($E > P$), perceived quality is less than satisfaction and tend to be unacceptable quality. To measure the gap between the mean of five perception dimensions scores and five expectations dimensions scores, the SERVQUAL score formula was calculated on ($P - E = SQ$). The gap scores were ranked from the highest score to the lowest score. The highest gap score's rank is 1 and the lowest gap score's rank is 5.

From Table 4.2, Reliability is the biggest expectation gap (-1.18) among five dimensions. Responsiveness is the second biggest expectation gap (-1.15), and Empathy is the third biggest expectation gap (-1.06). The fourth expectation gap is Assurance (-0.99). The smallest expectation gap is Tangible (-0.88). Regarding to Table 4.2, the results showed the negative gap between perception and expectation scores for all five dimensions. It implied that customers did not perceive the services delivered as they expected. Therefore café needs to improve its performance in all five areas.

4.8.11 the importance of each dimension from five features ranking:

It showed that customer give the most important to Reliability (26.33%). The second importance is Responsiveness (22.22%). The third importance is Empathy (20.11%), and followed by Assurance (17.12%) respectively. Tangible is the least important at 14.22%. It implied that customers gave top priority on the cafe to provide the promised services accurately. In contrast, they feel that the neat appearance of employees, physical environment and facilities, and appealing materials associated with services are less important to them when comparing to all five service dimensions.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Service quality is an important key for business success because it provides a lot of benefits. From this study, the customers of TOM N TOMS coffee shops did not perceive the services delivered from the restaurant as they expected. TOM N TOMS needs to be aware of reliability dimension as top priority and must emphasize on responsiveness. In addition, TOM N TOMS should train their employees, monitor their marketing communication, and conduct customer relationship program to close the gap and to secure long-term relationship.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The research results showed that reliability and responsiveness were the main problems of TOM N TOMS coffee shop. To ensure that the gap between customer expectations and perceived performance of service delivery is reduced as much as possible, TOM N TOMS coffee shops should do as follows:

The coffee shops needs to improve Reliability dimension as top priority, and the coffee shops must ensure that their marketing communications to potential customers is realistic because over statements about reliability to public lead to high expectations (Zeithaml, 2006). If the coffee shops cannot deliver the services as promise, customers perceive that the

coffee shops deliver poor service quality and lead to dissatisfaction. Also, maintaining customers' level of perceived quality alone is insufficient if the customer expectations are increasing.

The coffee shop needs to improve Responsiveness dimension, and the restaurant needs to well train their employees who are in regular contact with customers to perform services to meet customer expectation. To be success, the leadership and commitment of management are also necessary to create the service culture with positive attitude towards customer service (Zeithaml, 2006) in dealing with customer's requests, questions, complaints and problems.

The coffee shop lack of willingness to help and did not response to their requests and complaints immediately, and unhappy customers do not like to complaint, they will spread negative word of mouth to others (Reid & Bojanic, 2001). Therefore, the coffee shop should focus on customer relationship management programs to improve good relationships with existing customers in long-term.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The completion of this research was made possible by the contribution, encouragement of many individuals. I would like to thank my wonderful major advisor **Dr. Pacapol Anurit**, who provided constant major support of this research, for his patience review, comment, and suggestion. This Independent study would not have been accomplished without the assistance and guidance from my advisor to assisting me at all the time of research and writing of this study. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank to my supervisor **Dr. Vijit Supinit**, Dean, Graduate School of Business, and all teachers of MBA International Program for knowledge and encouragement.

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