

A Comparison of Service Quality Perception in Real Estate Brokerage Between Taiwan and Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare customer perceptions about service quality of real estate brokerage firms in Thailand and Taiwan by using Parasuraman's SERVQUAL scale. The results indicated that: (1) all five dimensions of SERVQUAL scale have significant impacts on consumer perception in both countries; (2) the five dimensions' weight ranking order is not the same in both countries; and (3) There was no significance difference between respondents from both countries in total service perception on their respective country's brokerage service except for minor differences in Tangible and Assurance factors.

Keywords: *service quality, customer's perception, real estate market, Taiwan, Thailand*

INTRODUCTION

Real estate business is generally viewed as a referral and repeat business. Concerning intensive competition among the property investor groups in the property markets of Taiwan and Thailand, besides each individual company's product characteristics and product value itself, satisfied customer service quality is another important factor, therefore real estate agents should consider how to improve this dimension (Marc & McDaniel, 1993). Measurement and understanding of consumer perceptions across this region and application of the results to improve service strategies is essential. Although all property investor groups have good liquidity, having appropriate insight about each country's real estate consumers, and precise information about consumer perception can enable service firms to better position themselves in the market. This study utilized the SERVQUAL scale by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994), regarded as a reliable theory for mining consumer perception, as a tool for measuring and comparing such perception.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Previous Study

Several conceptual models have been developed to define the service quality construct and the factors in order to define consumer perceptions and expectations (Mangold & Emin, 1990). Many researchers have elaborated on these models (Nitin, Deshmukh, & Prem, 2005). Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) described service quality as perceived by consumers starting from a comparison of how they feel firms should perform on this dimension with what they actually perceive. It is the gap between a customer's expectations and perceptions that determine service quality; the smaller the gap, the better the

quality of service and the greater the customer satisfaction. The gap items were then categorized into five dimensions as reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988) and they suggested the SERVQUAL scale for measuring service quality gap.

The SERVQUAL scale, a reliable measurement tool, has played an important role in the service quality literature and made valuable contributions in the area of perceived service quality measurement (Fick & Ritchie, 1991). The growth of literature in the field of service quality seems to have developed subsequently, providing continuous updating and learning from previous findings. The Gap model and SERVQUAL scale seems to draw much support from researchers (Akan, 1995; Avkiran, 1994; Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Bojanic, 1991; Gaur & Agrawal, 2006; Johns & Tyas, 1996; Johnson & Sirikit, 2002; Saleh & Ryan, 1991; Stodnick, & Rogers, 2008). However, some questions regarding its validity and reliability have been raised; the SERVQUAL scaling method as proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) has been widely debated, as is the Perception-Expectation (P-E) measurement method of service quality (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Carman, 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Gotlieb et al, 1994; Hartline & Ferrell, 1996; Rosen & Karwan, 1994). Cronin and Taylor (1992) emphasized the importance of service quality and its relationship with consumer satisfaction, arguing that service quality should be measured as an attitude, consequently developing the SERVPERF scale (a service quality tool for measuring perceptions only) and EP (Evaluated Performance) model based on perception only, instead of measuring together with expectations.

In the real estate business context, one study by Johnson, Dotson, and Dunlap (1988), suggested that the real estate brokerage business may be different from other service industries when it comes to define and measure service quality. Johnson et al. (1988) has hence modified the SERVQUAL scale to elucidate six dimensions rather than the original five, but this was challenged by Marc and McDaniel (1993) who tested the original 22-item SERVQUAL scale on customers in the real estate business, showing that the real estate and all other businesses were the same; there was no difference, and they also argued that the “uniqueness view point” of the real estate industry from Johnson’s study made the SERVQUAL scale unworkable.

Subsequently, Johnson’s study was further challenged by Susan and Theron (1995), who argued that the attempt to modify the SERVQUAL scale by Johnson et al. (1988) was not a valid application and they developed another scale for the real estate business which was called the RESERV scale, modified from the original SERVQUAL scale by adding and deleting items in scale dimensions. Susan and Theron (1995) proposed that the original SERVQUAL scale can be directly applied to real estate brokerages; the new RESERV scale provides additional practical usefulness in the specific real estate context. However, this scale was created and well-validated by a sample group only from home seller respondents but not home buyer respondents

Even though there is no generally accepted view on how to identify the quality of service, P or P-E; the majority of models and definitions support the view of evaluating service perception based on the SERVQUAL scale. Therefore, this study used a general SERVQUAL theory as a base for measuring and comparing consumer perceptions in Taiwan’s and Thailand’s real estate brokerage business fields.

SERVQUAL Scale

According to the following studies (Brooks, Lings, & Botschen, 1999; Fick & Ritchie, 1991; Marc & McDaniel, 1993; Nitin et al., 2005; Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1991, 1994; Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes, 2004; Susan & Theron, 1995; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003), the SERVQUAL scale includes 5 dimensions which in turn comprise 22 items; the definitions of all 5 dimensions are shown in Table 1 and the list of items is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Definition of SERVQUAL dimensions

5 Dimensions	SERVQUAL Definition
Tangibility	The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel dress, communication materials, the seller's outward appearance, exterior design, location & accessibility, all kinds of tools that are used for providing service.
Reliability	The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, reliability involves in consistency of performance and dependability. It means that the firm performs the service right the first time. It also means that the firm honours its promises. Reliability of service designates the seller's capability to supply the promised outputs at the stated level
Responsiveness	The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, responsiveness concerns the willingness or readiness of employees to provide service. It involves timeliness of service. Responsiveness refers to the corporation's capability to respond to and satisfy the customer's wishes. A willingness to react and reaction speed play a vital role in the service responsiveness.
Assurance	The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence including competence, courtesy, credibility, and security, Service assurance relates to the seller's capability to deliver the output, specifically in terms of the knowledge, politeness and trustworthiness of the employees and the service firms.
Empathy	The caring individualized attention that the firm provides its customers including access ability, communication and understanding the customer. Service empathy characterizes both the seller's willingness and capability to respond to individual customer desires.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Research Framework

SERVQUAL theory was a base theory for this research framework. The research framework for measuring and comparing consumer perception both in Thailand and Taiwan is shown in Figure 1.

Table 2. SERVQUAL items

5 Dimensions	SERVQUAL Items
Tangibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The physical facility outlook of real estate brokerage office visually appeals 2. Service persons of the real estate company are neat in appearance and well-dressed 3. The equipment in the real estate company is modern-looking and up-to-date 4. Advertising and all material associated with service of the brokerage is visually appealing 5. Brokerage Company operates at convenient business hours and locations
Reliability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Brokerage firms always do as they promise 7. The real estate company always shows sincere interest in solving problems 8. Sales persons from the real estate company always perform the service right at the first time 9. The real estate companies always deliver their service at the time they promise 10. Sales persons always keep customers informed about when services will be performed

Responsiveness	11. Sales persons of the real estate company always give prompt service to customers 12. Sales persons of the real estate company always are willing to help in a general manner 13. The real estate company is never too busy to respond to the customer's request 14. Customers never have to wait too long for any contact with real estate brokerage firms
Assurance	15. Behaviour of employees in brokerage in-stills customer confidence 16. Customers always feel secure in any of their transactions with the real estate company. 17. Sales persons of the real estate brokerage firms are consistently courteous 18. Sales persons of the real estate brokerages have ample knowledge to answer customer's questions
Empathy	19. The real estate companies give the customer individual attention 20. Sales persons of the real estate brokerage firms understand specific customer needs 21. The real estate brokerage company always protects customer's interest and well-being 22. Sales persons of the company deal with the customer in a caring fashion and provide personal attention

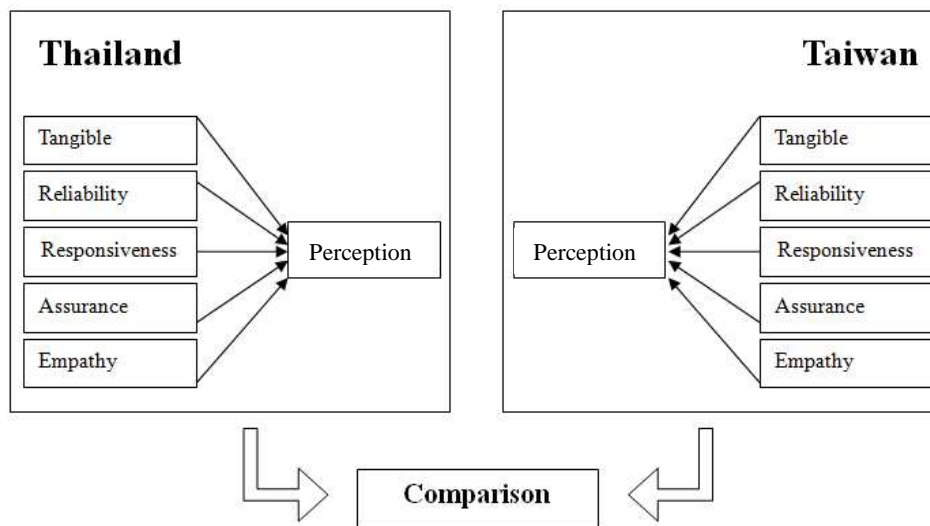


Figure 1. Research framework

Sample, Methodology, and Questionnaire

After reviewing the literature, a 22-item SERVQUAL questionnaire was developed to identify and analyze perceptions of house-buying consumers. Each question is based on a 7-point Likert scale. The questionnaires were translated into two local languages and sent directly to each respondent by hand to obtain objective opinion from potential housing buyers and users. A pilot test was used to test the reliability of the questionnaires; 40 questionnaires were sent out and completed by randomly sampled groups drawn from Bangkok and Kaohsiung's real estate customers. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis was applied to test the internal consistency of each of the items, dimensions, and perception attributes. The results showed

the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the overall questionnaire was 0.942, indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire was quite high, therefore SERVQUAL scales were deemed to be a reliable tool.

A random sampling method was used for the selection of the sample representing the population; in total, 260 customers in both Thailand and Taiwan housing markets were randomly selected. Questionnaires were randomly given to respondents; 130 questionnaires in Kaohsiung city and 130 questionnaires in Bangkok city; most respondents were adults older than twenty-two. 248 questionnaires were returned, equalling a 95.3 % survey response rate. After screening out unusable questionnaires, 201 questionnaires were left.

RESULT AND DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistic

The mean scores indicated that Thai respondents tended to perceive high average scores for service perception with real estate brokerage services in Thailand, and most of the dimensions and items received a means score higher than 4.0 in a 7-point Likert scale.

Table 3. Summary of descriptive statistic of Thailand and Taiwan data

Descriptive statistic by each dimension factor		Thailand		Taiwan	
		Mean		Mean	
Tangible	The physical facilities outlook of real estate brokerage office had perfect appeal.	5.3800	5.2500	5.5500	5.5560
	Service persons of real estate company were neat-looking and well-dressed.	5.3000		5.7300	
	The equipment in real estate company was modern-looking and up-to-date	5.2500		5.4400	
	Advertising and all material associated with service of the brokerage was visually appealing.	5.4100		5.7400	
	Brokerage Company operated at convenient business hours and locations.	4.9100		5.3200	
Reliability	Brokerage firms always did as what they promised.	4.0200	4.4360	4.3300	4.4680
	The real estate company always showed their sincere interest in solving problems.	4.4000		4.3500	
	Sales persons from the real estate company always performed the service right the first time.	4.8800		4.5500	
	The real estate company always delivered their service at the time they promised.	4.5700		4.5800	
	Sales persons always kept customers informed about when services would be performed.	4.3100		4.5300	
Responsiveness	Sales persons of the real estate company always gave prompt service to customers.	4.7500	4.6025	5.0200	4.8525
	Sales persons of the real estate company were always willing to help in a general manner.	4.8600		4.8300	
	The real estate company was never too busy to respond to customer requests.	4.4400		4.8200	
	Customer never had to wait too long for any contact with real estate brokerage firms.	4.3600		4.7400	

Assurance	Behaviour of employees in brokerage instilled customer confidence.	4.7000	4.8525	4.3100	4.3075
	Customers always felt secure in any of transactions with real estate company.	4.4900		4.0600	
	Sales persons of real estate brokerage firms were consistently courteous.	5.1800		4.4500	
	Sales persons of real estate brokerages have ample knowledge to answer customer questions.	5.0400		4.4100	
Empathy	The real estate companies gave customer individual attention.	4.5700	4.5325	4.8900	4.7425
	Sales persons of real estate brokerage firms understood the specific needs of the customer.	4.6400		4.9100	
	The real estate brokerage company always protected the customer's interest and well-being	4.3300		4.3900	
	Sales persons of the company dealt with the customer in a caring fashion and provided personal attention.	4.5900		4.7800	
Total Service Quality Perception Mean Score		4.7347		4.7853	

For Taiwan's respondents, they too tended to perceive high scores, and all of the dimensions and items received mean scores higher than 4.0. Compared to the Thailand results, highest scores were in the same dimension which was tangibility of service; nevertheless, the lowest scores were definitely different; in Thailand's case, it was reliability of service, but in Taiwan's case, it was service assurance.

ANOVA Analysis

The ANOVA analysis result is shown in Figure 2, in Thailand's case, respondents' background did not have any significance impact on Reliability and Empathy factors; in Taiwan's case, respondents' background did not have any significance impact on Responsiveness, Empathy, and Perception factors.

Looking into Thailand's data, only age and income had positive significance. The reason might be generational, as this generation is the first generation of Thai citizens that has lived in the more recent time of open country policies, and also in the time of changes such as: the internet boom, introduction of international education, and international culture absorption; therefore, middle-aged Thai citizens might have a broad vision and be on the path of building their wealth and assuming responsibility for family finances.

Concerning the Monthly income factor, higher income respondents had higher mean scores on Responsiveness and Assurance. This result might come from the behaviour of a richer class of Thai citizens, who always use services and buy products from leader service firms of the market with the best choices, as most of these leader firms have great service designs which include rapid responsiveness to customers and build a great firm's image to instill confidence in their customers; in addition, their service is specially designed for high-income customers. Therefore, that those high-income respondents have higher mean scores in Responsiveness and Assurance factor makes sense.

For Taiwan ANOVA result, age, marital status, and education background has a significance positive effect over the SERVQUAL dimensions. Respondent age was the important factor as for the Thai's respondents. Generational position might be the critical issue; due to varying generations have different ways of thinking, so different generations of the respondents have different mean scores on the Assurance dimension without any statistical linkage, therefore the reason might come from a "generation gap" which can affect the way people perceive service.

According to the results from Figure 2, respondents who are already married have significantly lower scores than respondents who are single. The lower score for married respondents might come from already

being a couple; it is more difficult to instill confidence in customers if they are a couple, than if they are single. Two people can help each other when they come to make important decisions and also married respondents have a high possibility of thinking more carefully about financial decisions because they have higher responsibility than does a single respondent, therefore it is more difficult for service employees to inspire trust in them.

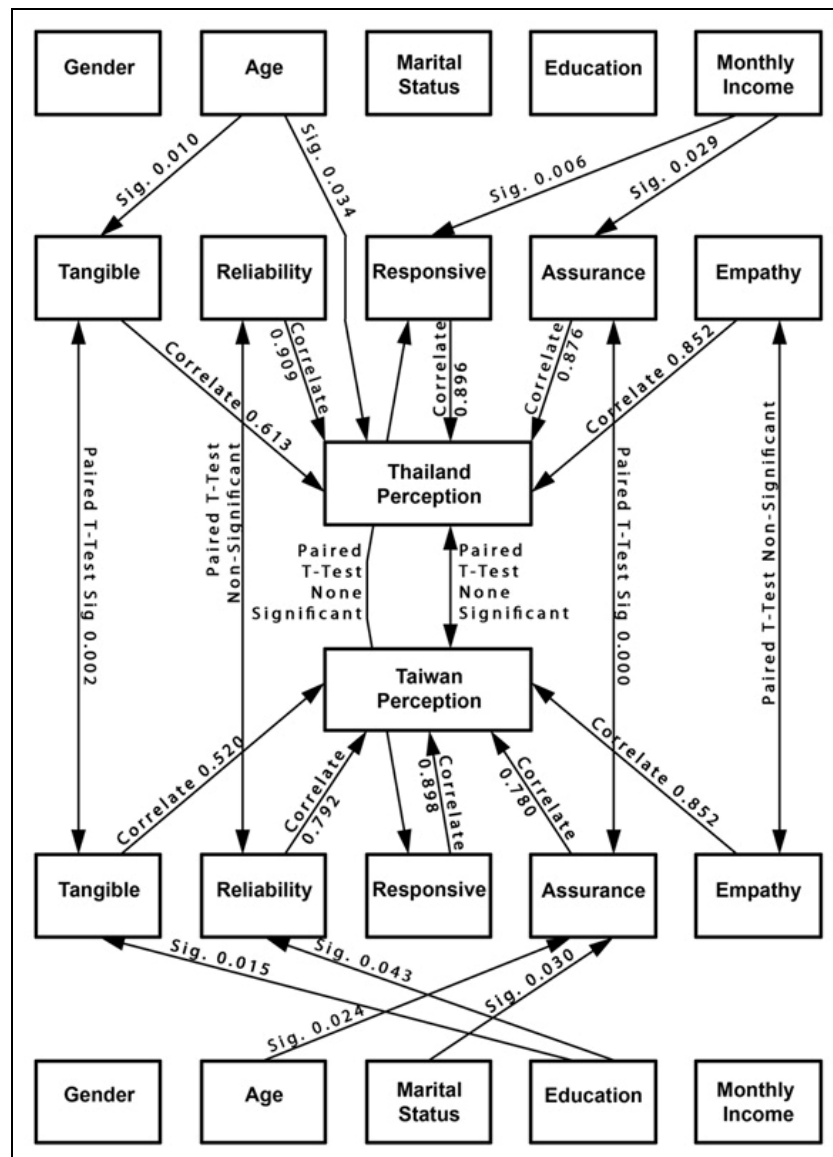


Figure 2. Summary of 3 Analysis results (ANOVA, Regression, and *t*-Test)

Higher educated respondents have the higher mean scores on the Tangible dimension than does a lower educated respondent. A well-educated Taiwan respondent might have a higher sense of taste than does a low-educated respondent; all tangible services offered by real estate firms in Taiwan are mostly well-designed and there is a high possibility that they will be perceived more favorably by well-educated respondents than lower-educated respondents because they have higher vision and taste.

Table 4. Summary of correlation scores by comparison between Thailand and Taiwan

Comparison between 2 countries		Correlation scores of 5 dimensions toward Perception factor				
		Tangible	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Thailand	Correlation to Perception factor	.613	.909	.896	.876	.852
Respondents	Sig. (2-tailed) to Perception	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)
Taiwan	Correlation to Perception factor	.520	.792	.898	.780	.852
Respondents	Sig. (2-tailed) to Perception	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)	.000 (**)

** Correlation is highly significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is highly significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5. Summary of correlation scores by ranking order of both countries

Ranking number (by weight's importance toward consumer's perception)	Comparison between 2 countries by Ranking order	
	Thailand Respondents	Taiwan Respondents
1	Reliability	Responsiveness
2	Responsiveness	Empathy
3	Assurance	Reliability
4	Empathy	Assurance
5	Tangible	Tangible

Regression Analysis

For Thai respondents, result of ranking order is the same as in the literature supported by a previous study in five separate industries by Parasuraman et al (1988), which tested for the presence of service quality by taking difference equations across Likert scale instruments of consumer perception, and the result was that reliability was first, tangible was last, and the other three were in the middle by ranking order. This result is the same as the study by Marc and McDaniel (1993), which find out that the consumer wants to have the provider meet their expectations in the area of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility followed by ranking order.

For Taiwanese respondents, the result of ranking order was different, as the order was: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. The only thing that was the same was that the tangible factor was the last important factor in the respondents' viewpoint; this implies that the consumer does not put much attention on the tangible outlook.

R-Square Result

From the results as shown in Table 6, it can be seen that the R^2 values received acceptable results except for the tangible factor. R^2 values for Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, and Empathy were very high. All of these 4 factors received a high score which was over 0.7, while only the tangible factor received a low score as shown by the R^2 result table. However, the R^2 of the whole regression equation is up to 0.967. The predictive value of the result would be practically accepted. From the results, we can formulate the regression equation as follows:

$$\text{Perception} = (0.376 \times \text{Tangible}) + (0.826 \times \text{Reliability}) + (0.802 \times \text{Responsiveness}) + (0.768 \times \text{Assurance}) + (0.726 \times \text{Empathy})$$

Table 6. Summary of R-Square value of each factor

Factor	R	R Square
Tangible	0.613(a)	0.376
Reliability	0.909(a)	0.826 **
Responsiveness	0.896(a)	0.802 **
Assurance	0.876(a)	0.768 **
Empathy	0.852(a)	0.726 **
Total R ²	0.973(a)	0.967 **

T-Test Result

Paired samples t-test was used to compare two means that were repeated measures from independent groups of respondent opinions to discover whether there were any significant differences between respondent opinions concerning service quality perception.

Table 7: Summary of paired samples test on differentiation

A pair of factors between 2 countries		Paired Differences		Sig. (2-tailed)
Thailand respondent	Taiwan respondent	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Factor	Factor			
Tangible	Tangible	0.30600	0.95153	.002 **
Reliability	Reliability	0.03200	1.20863	.792
Responsiveness	Responsiveness	0.25000	1.26830	.051
Assurance	Assurance	0.54500	1.29557	.000 **
Empathy	Empathy	0.21000	1.08753	.056
Perception	Perception	0.05060	0.95105	.596

Respondents from both countries had nearly equal levels of satisfaction in overall service perception. Most pairings were not significantly scored; this implies that there were no significant differences between all of the paired factors. Although most of the paired tests received a non-different score, 2 SERVQUAL dimensions received a significant score: that was Tangible and Assurance, which meant that Thailand's respondents had a significant difference perception in Tangible and Assurance dimensions from Taiwan's respondents, therefore these 2 factors will be a critical point for service managers because it is the differentiation between countries.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**Summary and Discussion**

An examination of the mean scores in Table 3 reveals a hierarchy of service quality perception. The overall mean score in this study was lower than most previous studies. In the previous study by Parasuraman et al. (1991), the overall mean score was 6.2200 and in the other studies relating to service quality perceptions, the overall mean scores were also high; 5.9500 in a restaurant study (Stevens, Knutson, & Patton, 1995), and 6.1200 in a lodging study (Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton, & Yokoyama, 1990). Higher values were also found in the study of Fick and Ritchie (1991), in their research on airlines (mean = 6.1800), hotels (mean = 6.1100), restaurants (mean = 5.9100) and ski areas (mean = 5.9100). Therefore, it can be deduced that the real estate brokerage services of both countries showed a relatively lower service quality perception in comparison. Table 7 indicates Taiwan and Thailand services mostly have no difference in consumer viewpoint perceptions; however, the average service perception mean score of both

countries was lower than the other previous studies, therefore service management of real estate firms from both countries must continue to improve on every aspect of service dimension.

From six paired t-tests between Thailand and Taiwan, only two received significant scores; these were on Tangible and Assurance dimensions. This implies significant difference for any firms that have plans to invest cross-countrywise such as the Fragrance Investment Group from Taiwan that has already invested in Bangkok. The difference illustrates a country gap and all international investors should pay attention to this because it is different country customer insight, even though they are both East-Asian countries and overall perception score is nearly the same. Minor differences in each country regardless; it can be suggested that all the East-Asian region might have the same result, hence similar service strategies can be applied, with each country having its own characteristics to concern all managers.

In Table 3, scores range from 4.0200 to 5.7400, with an overall mean score from Thai respondents of 4.7347, and for Taiwanese respondents, 4.7853. From the Thai data, an item 'advertisement and all material associated with service is visually appealing' within the 'tangible' had the highest mean score, which is the same result for Taiwanese respondents with the highest score in the same item. From the Thai data, an item 'brokerage firms always do as they promise' within 'reliability' had the lowest mean score, and from the Taiwan data, an item 'Customers always feel secure in any of their transactions with the real estate company' within 'assurance' had the lowest mean score. By closely looking at information from Tables 3, 4, and 5, the most important dimension to the Thai customer, Reliability dimension, received the lowest mean score and the least important dimension to the Thai customer, Tangible dimension, received the highest mean score.

These analyzed results show the errors firms make interpreting consumer insight; service firms in Thailand should place more attention on the Reliability factor. Reliability refers to services which are performed at the promised time, performed correctly, are error-free, and performed with interest. Reliability of service designates the seller's capability to supply the promised output at the stated level.

Within the Reliability dimension, the item 'brokerage firms always do what they promise' received the lowest mean score. In other words, the respondents expected the service to be carried out as service providers promise to do. For example, if the real estate firm offers its services by promising delivery in 15 minutes, then 15 minutes should be used as the standard time to provide service. When the service cannot be delivered to the consumer on time, service providers should provide an explanation for any delay, apologize, and compensate the customer for the lack of promptness and efficiency. Consistently doing what is promised, doing it correctly and on time, conveys reliability.

For the Taiwan respondents, the most important dimension to the customer, Responsiveness dimension, received the second highest mean score and the least important dimension to the customer, Tangible dimension, received the highest mean score. These analyzed results also illustrate the errors of Taiwan firms in interpreting consumer insight. The weight important ranking order of 5 dimensions is not the same as that previously established by Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Marc and McDaniel (1993). The reason might come from the maturity and the standard of real estate firms in Taiwan already surpassing developing-country level, therefore the Reliability of service firms is already well-accepted by the Taiwan consumer and because of this reason, the Taiwan consumer might not overly worry about the Reliability factor but might be more concerned about the Responsiveness factor. Responsiveness concerns the willingness and the readiness of employees to provide service; it also involves timeliness of service, employees' attitude and performance. The result from analysis matched with general Taiwanese behaviors, because Chinese culture places emphasis on speed of service, and is also concerned about "face".

The hierarchical structure of Chinese culture demands that the service firms should treat their consumer well according to their age, social position and ranking. The expectations from contact personnel would be to receive prompt, promised, accurate and sincere service. Employees should display a sense of willingness to help the customer. They should know what the customer likes and dislikes. They should always put the needs of the customer first, and make them feel that they are important because Taiwanese have a “face culture”, so by using verbal and nonverbal cues; they can demonstrate that they are ready to help.

Concerning the remaining five dimensional factors that were not the most important to the consumers, a 2nd or 3rd priority job can be assigned to these. For example, service assurance relates to the seller’s capability to deliver the output, specifically in terms of knowledge, politeness and trustworthiness of service employees. Ways that employees can be impressive to their customer is by being nice, attentive to their needs, using a pleasant voice, displaying a friendly smile, asking the customer if they need any help, showing special care, respect, and being polite and courteous. A knowledgeable employee will also have a positive impact on the consumer’s perception, as product or service knowledge tends to convey feelings of trust and confidence. Empathy dimension was also found to be the hierarchy of service quality perception, although it was not the most important factor to consumers in both countries. Service empathy describes the caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers including access ability, communication, understanding the customer, and whether the service provider goes ‘the extra mile’ to satisfy the wishes of the customer. For Taiwan respondents, Empathy was second in importance to consumers; efforts should be made by the management team to train sales contact personnel to provide individualized personal service to customers, which can be expressed in several ways. It could be as simple as recognizing an individual interest of the customer or real estate firms can develop unique offers directed for individuals, such as offering a specially packaged gift in celebration of a client’s birthday.

Although this study recommends placing more attention on the highest correlated score factors, service managers of both Thailand and Taiwan cannot ignore other factors and de-emphasize them because all five dimensions have a significant positive effect on customer perception according to Table 4. All of the five SERVQUAL dimensions have importance relative to consumer perception, however, if resources such as the budgets of the firms are limited, establishing priorities via applying resources for service design to the five SERVQUAL dimensions is the wisest choice, and in order to meet that goal, putting the correct ranked priority on the five service dimensions is critical.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The findings and discussions show that the highest in the hierarchy appeared to be ‘Reliability’ for Thailand and ‘Responsiveness’ for Taiwan, while the lowest of both countries was the ‘Tangible’ service dimension. Effective marketing managers would provide services according to these results. In order to achieve this, employees have to be well-trained and -informed to provide services that exceed customer demand. In the real estate context, interaction occurs from the moment the client and agent contact each other either verbally or non-verbally. Managers should ensure that the benefits offered to customers in promotional activities are delivered as promised. Delivering a high standard of quality requires management commitment and teamwork. Employees must realize how their performance affects the rest of the team.

By providing cross-training, a business can expose its employees to different perspectives and encourage them to be more aware of others’ priorities. Once the desired service quality is achieved, efforts should be made to standardize the service performance for future service encounters. Any firm providing a

high level of service quality can have an advantage and can also position itself as being superior compared with its competitors (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990).

For suggestions concerning the use of respondent background data from both countries, in Thailand, the service managers should plan for marketing and the rendering of high quality, carefully designed services considering age, customer class and taste, especially for high-income clients.

For Taiwan, customers falling into the categories of senior citizen, high-position, being married, and highly educated, must be specially well-treated and service must be carefully designed owing to their tastes.

According to the discussion about the difference of customers in Taiwan and Thailand, Assurance and Tangible were significant differences between both countries, so to improve Assurance factor; managers should study their target market precisely and recognize customers' attributes and their demands, by focusing on what they really want and how they can be satisfied, providing continuous care and concern for customers' needs by training employees and monitoring their performance especially in politeness and their knowledge of the firm's products.

To improve Tangible factors, service managers should employ a local designer to improve the outlook of all service material, advertisement, branding, office design, and employee dress. In the case of across-country investment, using well-trained and experienced local employees instead of their own country's employees might be the right choice. It is also recommended to all investors that the sales office be built to offer easy accessibility in location, time, and transportation.

Moreover, service managers should evaluate employees' performance constantly. Employees should participate in scheduled training courses, and here we should note that behaviour of employees is often instrumental in bringing about desired outcome. Learning involves both the development and modification of thoughts and behaviours; all real estate service firms in both countries should do the same, therefore managers should continuously redefine goals and policies, modify structures, re-engineer jobs, and track training, monitoring, rewarding, and punishing of employees. A customer experiences and judges the service quality on the basis of his or her perception of services. Therefore, every service manager should provide customers with full experiences conforming to their individual desires.

However, the measurement, monitoring and improvement of quality are an elusive task in many service organizations (Mangold & Emin, 1990). Service managers should establish a good organizational culture in cooperation with staff members to set the proper standards training for employees and support them with sufficient resources and facilities to minimize any communication obstacles

An aggressive marketer can develop a strong, attractive service design, for example, developing advertising enabling the development of consumer familiarity to make the purchase of products more enticing, to drive customer demand, and to improve customer perception. Some special service offers can be a great ingredient to drive intra-consumer demand by building a good brand image for the product to improve tangibility, and provide a strong warranty to increase assurance of confidence.

Another suggestion for real estate firms is to have a CRM program recognize frequent customers; this can bring about competitive advantage and help service firms survive in a competitive environment, and might also bring about long-term benefits. Consider that "it is more important to do what is strategically right, than what is immediately profitable" (Kotler, 1999).

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