

FROM SERVQUAL TO TOURQUAL IN REVIEWING SERVICE QUALITY MODELS IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract: *This paper provides a brief literature review on the key dimensions used to evaluate hotel service quality, based on academic research indexed. Service quality has been widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and organizational performance in the hospitality industry. Given the intangible and experience-based nature of hotel services, researchers have developed multiple theoretical and empirical models to conceptualize and measure service quality. This article critically reviews the most influential models, highlighting their theoretical foundations, empirical applications, strengths, limitations, and relevance to three-star hotels.*

Keywords: *hotel; quality; evaluation; models; scales*

J.E.L Classification: *Z32, M21*

1. Introduction

Early research conceptualized service quality as a comparison between customer expectations and perceived performance. This paradigm reflects the disconfirmation theory, which posits that satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. However, later studies challenged this assumption, arguing that perceptions alone may provide a more accurate and parsimonious measure of service quality. A key challenge in hospitality research is the multidimensional nature of service quality, which includes both tangible elements (e.g., facilities) and intangible aspects (e.g., staff behavior, atmosphere). Consequently, most models adopt a multi-attribute structure. The database used for this article are studies mentions in references from below, from Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar and so on, mostly from the last past decades, even if my first approach was to study last five years.

2. Methodology

This study employs a structured literature review methodology to investigate how hotel service quality has been conceptualized and measured in academic research. The review focuses on identifying key models, dimensions, and evaluation scales used in the hospitality industry, with particular attention to developments over the past last decades.

The inclusion criteria for my study are the most appropriate characteristics of the 13 models for measuring easier the service quality in hotels of three and for stars through questionnaires, on the one hand some functional attributes necessary for clients of the three-star hotels and on the other hand the features of the service

quality which are more appreciated by the tourists of four-star hotels. The exclusion criteria could be named the features of the models which do not make an image about the service quality, being mostly about the client/tourist characteristics, so not about the service, like the country from which is the tourist, the job or the specific of the community from where he comes.

The main **objective** of this study is to identify the dimensions of the hospitality offer which determine satisfaction for clients, especially that features for which tourists attach significant importance to, but overall generate low level of satisfaction. (Anderson, Fornell & Lehmann, 1994, Anderson, Fornell& Rust, 1997).

Second objectives consist in finding a good set up for investigating service quality in hotels, using well known models, for preparing and arranging the most appropriate questionnaires for three-star hotels and four-star hotels, in order to increase the quality of services in hospitality by identifying the issues and the gaps which need improvements and which can be made by the managerial team, keeping into account that 80% of Romanian Tourist are taking Romanian tourism services and just 20% from foreign tourists buy Romanian touristic services.

For the managers of hotels from Romania, become imperative to identify these perceived dimensions of service quality in hotels which increase satisfaction for Romanian tourists, which are the expectations and the way they perceive the hospitality services.

For this reason, any instrument or model for measuring perceived service quality in hotels and of client satisfaction, should pass through a scouring review, from methodologic point of view, before it will be used in practice.

3. Literature reviews on hotel service quality studies

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Early research conceptualized service quality as a comparison between customer expectations and perceived performance. This paradigm reflects the disconfirmation theory, which posits that satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations. However, later studies challenged this assumption, arguing that perceptions alone may provide a more accurate and parsimonious measure of service quality.

A key challenge in hospitality research is the multidimensional nature of service quality, which includes both tangible elements (e.g., facilities) and intangible aspects (e.g., staff behavior, atmosphere). Consequently, most models adopt a multi-attribute structure.

The Grönroos model (1984) represents one of the earliest attempts to conceptualize service quality. Its distinction between technical and functional quality remains highly influential. However, its primary limitation lies in its lack of operationalization, making it difficult to apply empirically without further adaptation. Despite this, it provides a strong theoretical lens for understanding how service delivery processes influence perceptions.

SERVQUAL model (1985, 1988) is arguably the most widely used service quality measurement model. Its five-dimensional structure has been validated across multiple industries, including hospitality. Nevertheless, it has been heavily criticized. Key critiques include:

- The instability of expectations over time
- The ambiguity in defining and measuring expectations
- The increased length and complexity of the questionnaire

Despite these limitations, SERVQUAL remains influential due to its comprehensive structure and adaptability.

SERVPERF model (1992) was developed as a response to SERVQUAL's limitations. By focusing solely on performance perceptions, it addresses issues related to expectation measurement and reduces survey complexity. Empirical studies have demonstrated that SERVPERF often explains more variance in service quality and customer satisfaction.

However, critics argue that eliminating expectations may oversimplify the evaluation process, particularly in contexts where expectations play a significant role, such as luxury hospitality.

The RATER model (1990) simplifies SERVQUAL into a more accessible framework. While it retains the same dimensions, it is primarily used as a managerial or pedagogical tool rather than a rigorous research instrument.

The Kano model (1984) introduces a non-linear perspective on service quality and satisfaction. Its classification of attributes into basic, performance, and excitement categories provides valuable insights into customer expectations.

A major strength of the Kano model is its ability to explain why certain improvements do not significantly increase satisfaction, while others create delight. However, its application is methodologically more complex, and it is not designed as a direct measurement scale.

LODGSERV (1990) represents one of the earliest attempts to adapt SERVQUAL to the hotel industry. Its main strength lies in its contextual relevance. However, it inherits SERVQUAL's limitations, particularly regarding expectation measurement.

DINESERV (1995) extends service quality measurement to restaurant settings. While useful for hotel food and beverage departments, it is limited in scope and cannot capture the full hotel experience.

These models, HOTELQUAL and HOSQUAL (1999), aim to refine service quality measurement within hospitality by incorporating industry-specific attributes. They emphasize customer experience and perceived value. However, their adoption in academic research is less widespread, which raises concerns regarding comparability and external validity.

HISTOQUAL model (2000) focuses on heritage and cultural tourism contexts. Its applicability to standard hotels is limited, but it offers valuable insights for niche markets such as boutique or heritage hotels.

ECOSERV model (2003) reflects the growing importance of sustainability in tourism. While it captures an increasingly relevant dimension of service quality, its applicability is restricted to environmentally oriented hospitality businesses.

TOURQUAL model (2017) broadens the concept of service quality to encompass the entire tourism experience. Although comprehensive, its wide scope makes it less suitable for focused hotel-level analysis.

Table 1 Main Service Quality Evaluation Models	
Model	Articles where it is applied
Grönroos Model, Author: Christian Grönroos (1984).	Grönroos, C. (1990), Kasiri, Leila Agha, Cheng Kenny Teoh Guan et al., (2017)
Kano Model, Author: Noriaki Kano (1984).	Pandey, A., Sahu, R., (2020), Zhou, K., Yao, Z., (2023), Bowen, Z., Yue Runpu, Y., (2025), Slevitch, L., (2025)
SERVQUAL Model: Authors: A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml and Leonard Berry (1985/1988).	Ali, Bayar Gardi (2021), Shyju, P.J., Kunwar Singh et al., (2021), Insuasti, Silva (2022), Nur Ayvaz-Çavdaro, Shilpa Iyanna, Foster, M., (2024)
LOGSERV Model, Authors: Knutson, Stevens, Wullaert, Patton și Thompson (1995).	Knutson, B.J., Stevens, P., Wullaert, C., Patton, M., & Yokoyama, F. (1995), Ali, A.S.M., Chik, C.T., (2020),
RATER Model Authors: Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman & Leonard L. Berry (1990)	Hsu, H.L., Hsu, H.C., (2022),
SERVPERF Model, Authors: J. Joseph Cronin and Steven A. Taylor (1992).	Cronin, J. J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1994), Sanjay, K. J., Garima, G., (2004), Shu, Z., Torralba, M.H., et al., (2023), Saleem, S.M.U, Taib C.A., et al., (2024) Ezeh, P.C., Ezuduji, I.O., (2024)
DINESERV Model, Authors: Stevens, Knutson și Patton (1995).	Knutson, B. J. Stevens, P., Patton, M., (2008), Apostol, E.M.D., Erodalyn, G., et al, (2023)
ECOSERV Model, Authors: Khan (2003).	Khan, M., (2003), Yusof N.A., Rahman, F.A., (2014), Aziz, M. N. A., Aziz, A., Isa, S. S., & Ismail, H. (2015).
HOTELQUAL Model, Authors: Falces, Sierra et al. (1999).	Sierra, B., Falces, C., (1999) Giraud, A.A., Ruth Fernández-Hernández, R.F., et al., (2021),
HOLSERV Model, Authors Mei, Dean and White (1999).	Sankar, G.S., David, A., et al., (2022) Kalnaovakul, K., & Promsivapallop, P. (2023), Foroudi, P., Ueno, A., (2025), Busser, J. A., Shulga L.V., (2025),
HISTOQUAL Model, Authors: Frochot and Hughes (2000).	Putra, F., (2016), Frochot, I., Hughes, H., (2000)
HOSQUAL Model, Authors: Getty and Thompson (1994).	Getty, J.M., Thompson, K.N., (1994)
TOURQUAL Model Author: Mondo, T.S. (2017)	Mondo, T.S., Perinotto, Andre (2022) Masimba, M.E., Manyanga, W., (2025), Mondo, T. S., Tinoco Luz, A. B., (2026),

(Source: created by author)

4. Discussions

The literature review highlights a clear evolution of service quality models in the hospitality industry, from conceptual frameworks to practical measurement tools and sector-specific adaptations. Early models, such as the Grönroos and Kano models, provide strong theoretical insights but lack direct applicability in empirical research. In contrast, measurement models like SERVQUAL and SERVPERF offer structured and operational approaches for assessing service quality.

The findings indicate that no single model can be considered universally superior. Instead, the appropriateness of each model depends on the research context and objectives. SERVQUAL remains one of the most widely used models due to its multidimensional structure, despite criticism related to the measurement of expectations. SERVPERF, on the other hand, provides a more efficient alternative by focusing exclusively on performance perceptions and has demonstrated stronger empirical validity in several studies. In my opinion, SERVQUAL should be adapted to the local specific of the area where the hospitality services are generated.

Furthermore, the analysis shows a growing trend toward industry-specific models such as LODGSERV, HOTELQUAL, and TOURQUAL, which enhance contextual relevance but reduce comparability across studies. These models are particularly useful in capturing the unique characteristics of hotel services.

Overall, the results emphasize the importance of selecting a service quality model that balances theoretical rigor with practical applicability, depending on the specific characteristics of the context under analysis.

5. Conclusions

In light of the previous discussions, the transition from SERVQUAL to more recent models such as TOURQUAL reflects a significant shift in how service quality is understood and measured in the hotel industry. This evolution highlights a move from expectation-based approaches toward performance-oriented and context-specific frameworks.

SERVQUAL should be adapted in my opinion after the specific of the area where hospitality offer is generated for the client.

The distinction between conceptual models (e.g., Grönroos, Kano) and measurement models (SERVQUAL, SERVPERF) remains essential. While conceptual models provide theoretical depth, measurement models offer practical tools for empirical analysis. The ongoing debate regarding the role of expectations is also reaffirmed, with evidence increasingly supporting SERVPERF due to its simplicity and stronger empirical performance.

At the same time, the shift from generic to industry-specific models is evident. While SERVQUAL enables cross-industry comparison, models such as LODGSERV, HOTELQUAL, HOSQUAL, and TOURQUAL provide greater relevance for the hospitality context, capturing the complexity of tourism experiences more effectively. The findings suggest that no single model is sufficient on its own. Instead, the progression from SERVQUAL to TOURQUAL should be seen as complementary. In the context of four-star hotels, SERVPERF emerges as a suitable core model, while integrating Kano elements enhances strategic insight by distinguishing key service attributes. TOURQUAL further contributes by offering a more holistic, tourism-oriented perspective.

In particular, in studies for hotels of three or four stars should be utilized a mix of attributes from the service quality models depending of the specific of the area where the hospitality services are offered, starting with the most important one, SERVQUAL and taking elements from other service quality models, until TOURQUAL if does fit to the particularity of the area of the hotel.

Future research should focus on cross-cultural validation and the integration of real-time data and advanced analytical methods, such as machine learning, to better capture the dynamic nature of service quality in the evolving hospitality industry.

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