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**CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTION OF SERVICE QUALITY IN BANKING
 AND THE LEVEL OF CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION:
 A STUDY OF MAYBANK BERHAD**

This study focuses on determinants of customer satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to examine the significant factors of bank which can affect the customer's satisfaction level. This study also presents how customers rank the factors according to their priorities and demographic differences. The total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, and 137 completed questionnaires were added in this study. The findings show that all 8 dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, price, accessibility and effectiveness) have a significant and positive relationship with customer satisfaction. The higher service that satisfies most bank customers is tangibility dimension. The hypotheses developed in this study is fully accepted because there is a significant and positive relationship between customer perception and customer satisfaction towards all 8 dimensions of service quality in banking.

Keywords: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, price, accessibility, effectiveness, customers' satisfaction, Malaysia.

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**СПРИЙНЯТТЯ КЛІЄНТАМИ ЯКОСТІ ПОСЛУГ У БАНКІВСЬКІЙ
 СФЕРІ ТА РІВЕНЬ ЗАДОВОЛЕНОСТІ КЛІЄНТІВ: ЗА ДАНИМИ
 ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ БАНКУ "МЕЙБАНК БЕРХАД" (МАЛАЙЗІЯ)**

У статті досліджено фактори задоволеності клієнтів послугами банків. Показано, як клієнти можуть ранжувати фактори у відповідності до своїх пріоритетів і за демографічними особливостями. Результати показали, що всі 8 параметрів (відчутність, надійність, рівень чуйності, впевненість, співпереживання, ціна, доступність та ефективність) мають значну і позитивну взаємозалежність із задоволеністю клієнтів. Найбільшу значущість має параметр "відчутності". Доведено існування значного позитивного зв'язку між сприйняттям клієнтів, задоволеністю клієнтів і 8 параметрами якості обслуговування в банківській сфері.

Ключові слова: відчутність, надійність, рівень чуйності, впевненість, співпереживання, ціна, доступність, ефективність, задоволеність клієнтів, Малайзія.

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**ВОСПРИЯТИЕ КЛИЕНТАМИ КАЧЕСТВА УСЛУГ В БАНКОВСКОЙ
 СФЕРЕ И УРОВЕНЬ УДОВЛЕТВОРЕННОСТИ КЛИЕНТОВ:
 ПО ДАННЫМ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ БАНКА "МЕЙБАНК БЕРХАД"
 (МАЛАЙЗИЯ)**

В статье исследованы факторы удовлетворенности клиентов услугами банков. Показано, как клиенты могут ранжировать факторы в соответствии со своими приоритетами и демографическими особенностями. Результаты показали, что все 8 параметров (осязаемость, надежность, уровень отзывчивости, уверенность, сопереживание, цена, доступность и эффективность) имеют значительную и положительную взаимозависимость с удовлетворенностью клиентов. Наибольшую

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значимость имеет параметр "осязаемости". Доказано существование значительной положительной связи между восприятием клиентов, удовлетворенностью клиентов и 8 параметрами качества обслуживания в банковской сфере.

Ключевые слова: осязаемость, надежность, уровень отзывчивости, уверенность, соперничество, цена, доступность, эффективность, удовлетворенность клиентов, Малайзия.

INTRODUCTION

In a business world nowadays, many types of business provide various services to customers. Increasing needs and demands urge organizations compete to attract customers. One of the largest service providers in business area is banking industry. Various strategies are formulated to retain customers and the key of it is to increase the service quality level. Under global competition, private bank offers different types of product and wants to give high quality service to its customers. They can only distinguish themselves on the basis of price and quality in product developments because this matter is easy to duplicate and imitate for competitors. According to Parasuraman et al. (1985) and Zeithaml et al. (1990), delivery of quality services to customers is the key to success of any business. This is because by customer loyalty it can be determined whether the service offered is satisfying or dissatisfying customers.

Customers are very different nowadays, because of their exposure to information, they are better educated, and more demanding in products and services they require, and they are more familiar with the technology. The 21st century consumer market raises many questions for those businesses that need to respond to this new era of consumerism. Building and maintaining relationships with customers has become a key strategic point with service industries. In any business sectors, competition regarding service quality, customer value and satisfaction is increased because these are the main factors to compete among manufacturers and service providers (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Parasuraman et al., 1988; McDougall, Levesque, 2000).

The objectives of this study are: to identify the perception of service quality in banking services, to identify the best dimension of service quality in banking, to examine the relationship between customers' perception of banking service quality and the level of satisfaction. Thus, this study is useful to relevant parties, especially banks, at which managers will be more sensitive to the issues regarding the services provided by them. It also acts as a reference for customers to be more aware of their rights in order to get the best services from banks.

LITERATURE

As mentioned in earlier literature, critical factors of business indicated that increasing in service quality is the measurement of success for business (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Dawes and Swailes (1999) believed that if banks provide greater value of quality services than their competitors, customers will highly trust those banks. From this situation, banks can stand strong and gain high revenue because they able to compete in specific market better than their competitors (Davies et al., 1995).

However, in providing services there must be a place for unfair treatment and this factor will lead to customer complaints because people seldom attempt to obtain the

best services, but instead seek their services and consistent treatment (Ambrose et al., 2007). In order for banks handle the problem of service, they should provide a similar service to make the customer satisfied. This is because perceived fairness influences customer loyalty to banks (Chebata and Slusarczyk, 2005). To strengthen this statement, some researchers suggested that perceived service quality performance is the most powerful predictor of customer satisfaction (Dabholkar et al., 2000; Santouridis et al., 2009).

Dimension of service quality in banking.

SERVQUAL

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), a SERVQUAL model is to measure service quality as compared to differentiation between customer perception and expectation of the service and the actual performance of the service received by the customer provided by the company at a certain period of time. This measurement has been used in a variety of service industries. Among academics and researchers this method has been very popular to assess the customer perception of service quality. To measure perceived service quality, the model has provided a comprehensive conceptualization of service quality with an instrument. It comprises 22 items that consist of 5 dimensions of service quality which are:

- Tangibility (appearance of physical components);
- Reliability (dependability of service provider and accuracy of performance);
- Responsiveness (promptness and helpfulness);
- Assurance (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence);
- Empathy (caring, individualized attention the firm gives its customers).

Tangibility

The study conducted by Lai (2004) found that tangibility is positively related to customer satisfaction. At India, a case in retail banking investigates that customers focus more on tangibles (Koushiki, Choudury, 2007). Zaim et al. (2010) mentioned that tangibility as the significant aspect for the bank to provide quality service. On the other hand, Baumann et al. (2007) found that tangibles are not related to customer satisfaction, in contrast with Ahmed et al. (2010).

Reliability

According to Zaim et al. (2010), reliability is one of the significant factors of customer satisfaction in the conventional banking sector of Pakistan. Arasli et al., (2005), in Greek Cypriot banking found by using SERVQUAL approach that reliability has the highest impact on customer satisfaction. While Chaniotakis and Lymperopoulos (2009) pointed that reliability is not related to customer satisfaction.

Responsiveness

Levesque and McDougall (1996) revealed that banks can increase the level of satisfaction by having a good relationship between employee and customer. Besides, they suggest in order to maintain customer satisfaction banks should know the way how to handle customer problems. Management of banks should pay attention to potential failure points and should be responsive to customer problems because there are variations across demographic variables existed in service quality (Sudesh, 2007). Mengi (2009) also pointed out that responsiveness is positively related to customer satisfaction.

Assurance

According to Mengi (2009), to gain customer satisfaction with the bank, the dimension in assurance is important. In order to increase customer trust, Sandip Goash Hasra and BL Srivasta (2009) indicated that bank should focus on the assurance service. A similar study of Kumar et al. (2010) found that assurance leads to satisfaction.

Empathy

According to Sandip Gosh Hasra and BL Srivasta (2009), customer will be loyal and willing to pay if banks care about the empathy. This is also supported by Zaim et al. (2010) who mentioned empathy as the significant aspect for bank quality service. Other authors also stated that this dimension also lead to satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2010). Ladhari (2009) also found that empathy is positively related to customer satisfaction. However, in contrast with Baumann et al. (2007), he investigated that empathy is negatively related to customer satisfaction.

Price

The dimension of price which is linked to interest rate customer satisfaction is very important (Levesque, McDougall, 1996). Glaveli et al. (2006) mentioned that price is a very important factor for women. When dealing with women customers, explanations of fees and charges takes more time. It is contrasted to other research that mentioned customers of different gender, age and income group do really not care about facilities and competitiveness of their banks (Jamal, Naser, 2003).

Accessibility

The other opinion on dimension of service quality is that banks should focus on service with high accessibility in order to satisfy customers (Al-Fazwan, 2005). He stated that a particular bank should meet customer expectations and take maximum efforts to increase the level of services.

Effectiveness

Gutek (1995) investigated that different genders have different perceptions of service quality. Male showed significance in the dimension of bank effectiveness. This dimension ranked highest as compared to accessibility and price dimension. The authors concluded that there is a more positive perception of quality of service on effectiveness (Glaveli et al., 2006).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND TOOLS

In order to collect the data, a quantitative approach followed. The target population composed of customers above 18 years who had a bank account open at the bank. Data were collected by using a convenience sampling method. The total of 150 questionnaires were distributed randomly to customers who visit the Maybank Berhad. Equal numbers of customers were asked to fill the questionnaire for each branch. The total of 150 questionnaires were distributed and 137 filled questionnaires were received from the customers, considered as sample respondents.

There are two parts of the questionnaire: the first section contains the questions on the personal profiles of the respondents (gender, marital status, race, age, education and profession). Meanwhile in the second section is the measuring of bank service quality (BSQ) as developed by Bahia and Natel (2000).

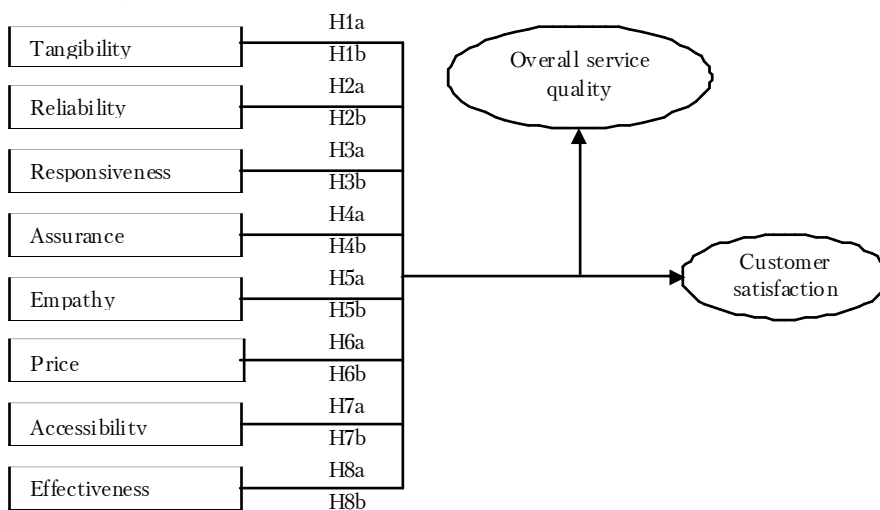
Research framework

Figure 1. **Dimension of service quality**

Hypothesis Development

H1a: There is a significant and positive relationship between tangibility and overall service quality.

H1b: There is a significant and positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction.

H2a: There is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and overall service quality.

H2b: There is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction.

H3a: There is a significant and positive relationship between responsiveness and overall service quality.

H3b: There is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction.

H4a: There is a significant and positive relationship between assurance and overall service quality.

H4b: There is a significant and positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction.

H5a: There is a significant and positive relationship between empathy and overall service quality.

H5b: There is a significant and positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction.

H6a: There is a significant and positive relationship between price and overall service quality.

H6b: There is a significant and positive relationship between price and customer satisfaction.

H7a: There is a significant and positive relationship between accessibility and overall service quality.

H7b: There is a significant and positive relationship between accessibility and customer satisfaction.

H8a: There is a significant and positive relationship between effectiveness and overall service quality.

H8b: There is a significant and positive relationship between effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.

Reliability test

The result of the reliability test were analysed to determine the reliability of questions in each dimension of service quality. The results are below.

Table 1. Reliability test by using Cronbach's Alpha

Section	Number of question	Value reliability
Tangibility	5	0.833
Reliability	4	0.900
Responsiveness	3	0.829
Assurance	3	0.908
Empathy	3	0.793
Price	3	0.894
Accessibility	3	0.923
Effectiveness	4	0.778

According to Table 1, tangibility has the value 0.8333, reliability is 0.900, responsiveness is 0.829, assurance is 0.908, empathy is 0.793, price is 0.894, accessibility is 0.923 and effectiveness value is 0.778. All of the service quality dimension value reliability is more than 0.7000 indicating that the items tested were statistically reliable to be used in other descriptive or inference analysis.

KMO Test and Bartlett's Test

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO		.887
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	766.076
	Df	36
	Sig.	.000

According to KMO value lists that each range value has different analysis where from 0.00 to 0.49 (unacceptable), 0.50 to 0.59 (miserable), 0.60 to 0.69 (mediocre), 0.70 to 0.79 (middling), 0.80 to 0.89 (merituous), and 0.90 to 1.00 (marvellous). According to Table 2, KMO value shows 0.887. As a rule, KMO should be 0.60 or higher in order to proceed with factor analysis.

Background of the respondents

Information on background of the respondents was collected through the questionnaire in the first part of the questionnaire. The general information on the respondents is presented in Table 3.

In the 137 sample, the male and female respondents are 67 and 70 respectively which is roughly equal. As for the marital status, single are 77, and married are 60 respondents. The most frequent race is Malay (57 respondents), followed by Chinese and India (31 and 28 respectively). In the whole sample, 37.96% of the respondents fell in the age range of 21–30, and 36.50% fell in the range of 31–40. In terms of educational level, the respondents are very different: high school (41.60%), postgraduate

(14.6%) and university graduate (13.14%). 56 respondents work as employees, 26 are businessmen, 23 are students, 17 are others and the rest are housewives (12 persons).

Table 3. General information on the respondents

		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	67	48.91
	Female	70	51.09
	Total	137	100.0
Marital Status	Single	77	55.47
	Married	60	43.80
	Total	137	100.00
Race	Malay	57	41.61
	India	28	20.44
	Chinese	31	22.63
	Others	21	15.33
	Total	137	100.0
Age	Under 20	6	4.38
	21-30 years	52	37.96
	31-40 years	50	36.50
	41-50 years	19	13.87
	Above 50 years	10	7.30
	Total	137	100.0
Education Level	Primary	11	8.03
	High school	57	41.61
	PhD	16	11.68
	University graduate	18	13.14
	Postgraduate	20	14.60
	Others	15	10.95
	Total	137	100.0
Profession	Employee	56	40.88
	Businessman	29	21.17
	Student	23	16.79
	Housewife	12	8.76
	Others	17	12.41
	Total	137	100.0

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in banking industry.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation

	Customer satisfaction	Tangibility	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy	Price	Accessibility	Effectiveness
Customer satisfaction	1								
Tangibility	.270**	1							
Reliability	.627**		1						
Responsiveness	.290**	.637**	.733**	1					
Assurance	.274**	.463**	.539**	.559**	1				
Empathy	.272**	.532**	.543**	.568**	.693**	1			
Price	.185*	.575**	.567**	.651**	.461**	.564**	1		
Accessibility	.380**	.422**	.595**	.562**	.339**	.373**	.458**	1	
Effectiveness	.291**	.451**	.460**	.477**	.499**	.513**	.489**	.463**	1

Tangibility and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant and positive relationship between tangibility and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant and positive relationship between tangibility and customer satisfaction.

In Table 4, it can be seen that the correlation (r) of tangibles is 0.270 and the significant level is 0.01. It can be seen from that table the p -value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01. Therefore, we concluded that there is a positive relationship between tangibles and customer satisfaction in the Maybank Berhad. The results are in line with Koushiki, Choudury, 2007; Zaim et al. (2010); Ahmed et al. (2010).

Reliability and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a significant and positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction.

Table 4 shows that the correlation (r) is 0.370 for reliability and the p -value is 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.01. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted and there is positive relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad. This result supports Zaim et al. (2010).

Responsiveness and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 3a: There is a significant and positive relationship between responsiveness and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a significant and positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

According to Table 4, responsiveness is one of the predictor of customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that the correlation (r) of responsiveness is 0.290 and p -value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted and positive relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction is moderate, same as in Sudesh (2007), Mengi (2009).

Assurance and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 4a: There is a significant and positive relationship between assurance and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 4b: There is a significant and positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction.

From Table 4, the correlation (r) of assurance is 0.274 with p -value is 0.000 (less than 0.01). With significant and positive relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction, the hypothesis are fully accepted. This result supports Kumar et al. (2010) who found that assurance leads to satisfaction.

Empathy and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 5a: There is a significant and positive relationship between empathy and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 5b: There is a significant and positive relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction.

Based on Table 4, it can be observed that correlation (r) for empathy is 0.272 and p -value is significant which is 0.000. So, the hypothesis is accepted because empathy shows a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. This is consistent with Ladhari (2009), Baumann et al. (2007).

Price and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 6a: There is a significant and positive relationship between price and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 6b: There is a significant and positive relationship between price and customer satisfaction.

According to Table 4, the figure for the correlation (r) is 0.185 and the significant level is 0.01 while the p -value is 0.000. Similar with the previous hypothesis, this result is accepted because there is a positive relationship between price and customer satisfaction.

Accessibility and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 7a: There is a significant and positive relationship between accessibility and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 7b: There is a significant and positive relationship between accessibility and customer satisfaction.

According to Table 4, accessibility is the strongest among the correlations (r) that is 3.80 with the significant level of 0.01, since the p -value is 0.000. As a conclusion, the hypothesis is accepted and there is positive relationship between accessibility and customer satisfaction, same as in Al-Fawwaz (2005).

Effectiveness and customer satisfaction in Maybank Berhad, Skudai.

Hypothesis 8a: There is a significant and positive relationship between effectiveness and overall service quality.

Hypothesis 8b: There is a significant and positive relationship between effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

Refer to Table 4, the correlation for dimension effectiveness in service quality is 0.291 with the significance level of 0.01. The p -value is 0.000. In short, the hypothesis is accepted because there is a positive relationship between effectiveness and customer satisfaction. Gutek (1995) investigates the differences gender has in perceptions of service quality. Male have shown more significance in the dimension of bank effectiveness. Similar with other authors it is concluded that there is more effect in perception of service quality from effectiveness (Glaveli et al., 2006).

Regression Analysis

Table 5. Regression analysis with dependent variable (customer satisfaction)

Path from	Path to	Hypothesis	Estimation (β -value)	t-value	RI Scale	P-Value
Overall service quality	Tangibility	H1a	0.580	7.520	0.300	0.000
	Reliability	H2a	0.570	9.400	0.400	0.000
	Responsiveness	H3a	0.570	10.260	0.410	0.000
	Assurance	H4a	0.540	9.320	0.400	0.000
	Empathy	H5a	0.810	17.100	0.660	0.000
	Price	H6a	0.450	7.080	0.270	0.000
	Accessibility	H7a	0.400	6.750	0.250	0.000
	Effectiveness	H8a	0.620	7.480	0.300	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	Tangibility	H1b	0.596	5.720	0.442	0.000
	Reliability	H2b	0.634	7.729	0.554	0.000
	Responsiveness	H3b	0.675	9.299	0.625	0.000
	Assurance	H4b	0.470	5.561	0.432	0.000
	Empathy	H5b	0.637	7.045	0.518	0.000
	Price	H6b	0.436	5.090	0.401	0.000
	Accessibility	H7b	0.539	7.352	0.535	0.000
	Effectiveness	H8b	0.640	5.723	0.442	0.000

Source: Authors'

Table 5 shows that each dimension of service quality strongly positively affects the overall service quality, with the range of β -values from 0.400–0.810 and customer

satisfaction with the range of 0.436–0.675. Therefore, this study on independent and dependent variables supports the statement that the level of perception and customer satisfaction is significantly associated with service quality. As we can see from the t-value analysis, each dimension amount is above 0.05%, so the research is acceptable.

CONCLUSION.

This study achieves its main objectives. Customers' perception of service quality clearly shows that it can affect customer satisfaction in banking. However, researchers believe that customers are more interested to receive fair treatment. This is because people seldom obtain the best services, but instead seek their own services and consistent treatment.

Besides, the result is confirmed by comparing with several previous researchers that had similar outcomes.

Last but not least, the findings of this study hopefully can be useful to relevant parties, especially banks, which will be more sensitive to the recommendation made. This study also acts as a reference for future researchers who wish to explore in-depth service quality.

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