



EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE QUALITY OF MELLAT BANK EDUCATION CENTER BASED ON THE SERVQUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Emphasis on continuous learning by managers is a good way to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. In a competitive, cost-effective situation where managers need continuous improvement, attending training courses is the best option. Training, as a suitable tool for acquiring knowledge, makes it possible for managers to apply scientific methods in the management of tasks. The current research is done to evaluate the service quality of the education center of Mellat Bank in providing the educational service to the managers of the Mellat Bank Branches in Gilan province based on the SERVQUAL model. This research is of survey-descriptive and the statistical population consists of 60 of managers of Mellat Bank branches in Gilan Province that were under expertise training in 2018. Since the population size of the study is not much, therefore, the whole research population was studied. Data collection was conducted using the SERVQUAL questionnaire in 2019. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability that is obtained by 91%. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, experts' opinions were used. Data analysis was conducted using a two-sample t-test to understand the difference between each one of the aspects of the model. The results showed that there is no significant difference between the expectations of the managers of the Mellat Bank Branches of Gilan Province and the services received from the education center of this Bank, indicating the relative satisfaction with the quality of services provided in this center.

Keywords: Education Quality, Management Training, SERVQUAL model, Mellat Bank

INTRODUCTION

The quality of specialized training has always been of interest to banks and financial and credit institutions due to its significant relationship with increasing profits, developing competitive markets, attracting customer satisfaction, and reducing current costs. According to such an approach, training should lead to improved performance at the individual level and quantitative and qualitative development of products and services at the organizational level. This continuous improvement is not only necessary to deal with environmental opportunities and threats, but also to increase the ability of managers to make decisions, play new roles, and present innovative initiatives (Hadavand, 2010).

To this end, it is required to define the criteria to evaluate the expected quality of training in proportion to the activity area and the working space of banks and credit institutions so that based on which, decisions be made on the method of implementing the courses.

The quality of specialized courses is a result of a series of specific measures that meet the needs of managers in a specific temporal and spatial point. Based thereon, two characteristics of

“accordance with the predetermined standards” and “reaching the clarified goals” are the appropriate base for the definition of the quality. Based on the first feature, quality judgment is based on a set of predefined standards. When such standards are not available, quality assessment is based on the second feature. Employees, for example, use their personal feedback to determine how well the training is being implemented in line with the goals set for the courses. In this way, quality is defined in specialized training through the difference between expectations (what is expected to be received from training) and perceptions (what is received from training) (Zhang and Yyezhuang, 2014).

The quality of the training required by the managers of banks and financial and credit institutions has become very important due to the important role that these centers play in business markets. Among the research conducted by Jiang on the strategy of improving the quality of skills training of the managers of Kunlun Bank of China by SERVQUAL method, it is shown that the training provided in three dimensions of five dimensions (confidence dimension, accountability dimension, and alignment dimension) has been higher than expectations (Jiang, 2015). In China's banking industry, Yonguei Wang examines the relationship between the quality of skills training and improving the performance of the country's bank managers. The results indicate that there is a direct relationship between the quality of training and improving the performance of managers (Shaney, 2016). The findings of a study conducted by Paton on the effective factors on the improvement of the performance of CIBC financial institutions managers indicate that the fair quality of their training resulted in some evidence of planning for the improvement of performances (Harman, 2012). The Shields research conducted using the SERVQUAL method on the insurance service institution of Sace, in Italy, shows that according to the opinion of senior managers, the training does not enjoy the required quality (Pariseau and Jinior, 1977). Furthermore, in a study entitled “accordance and use of SERVQUAL model in the evaluation of skill training of Morgan Stanley Bank in the US”, the quality of training is investigated based on the managers. The results show that there is a significant difference between the perception of managers from training and their expectations (Luiz, 2011).

The studies conducted on the Lloyds Bank of England show that according to the managers of this bank, the quality of training is moderate and above (Pariseau and Junior, 2015). Bradley has also conducted research to determine the perceptions and expectations of managers of large banks of Germany from the provided training by the valid educational institutions and implemented the gap analysis. The results show that the quality of training was not determined based on the determined expectations (Bradley, 2011).

The studies of Chua on Kookmin Bank, the biggest provider of financial and banking services in South Korea, were done using the SERVQUAL model. The quality of training was evaluated at a desirable level (Chua, 2011). Using data mining on the quality of training in the financial and credit institutions, Niklasson concluded that the continuous monitor of the training quality leads to scientific and professional cooperation (Niklasson, 1998).

Georgiou and Rossner analyzed the quality of managers’ performance according to the effectiveness of training. The results of their study emphasize the necessity of organizational networking to get cognitive feedbacks from demands to deepening the quality evaluations (Georgiou and Rossner, 2009). Other research includes a study conducted by Halasz to assess



the relationship between the motivation of American bank executives and their educational quality. This research, unlike other research that focuses on educational outputs, emphasizes on inputs and attributes the achievement of quality to the efforts of all relevant and stakeholders in education (Halasz, 1989).

Therefore, the main goal of the current study is to evaluate the quality of the provided services in the education center of Mellat Bank to 60 of managers of Mellat Bank branches in Gilan Province. To this end, the following five hypotheses are evaluated using the SERVQUAL model the effectiveness of which has been confirmed as a useful evaluation factor in different studies:

- **First Hypothesis:** according to the managers of the Mellat Bank branches in Gilan Province, the quality of the service provided has been acceptable at the “tangible factors” dimension.
- **Second to Fifth Hypotheses** raise exactly the same question about the variables "credibility, accountability, empathy, and confidence."

RESEARCH THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The service quality assessment model was first proposed in 1985 by three researchers, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, in the field of organizational service evaluation. They first identified ten factors: "accessibility, communication, competence, humility, credibility, reliability, accountability, security, understanding and tangible factors" as effective factors in assessing customer expectations and perceptions about service quality dimensions. In this model, although the relative importance of each of the factors listed from one organization to another may be different, most of the criteria required for evaluation are listed in this list. However, the researchers found strong correlations between communication, competence, humility, reliability, and security, as well as access and understanding, and combined them into two dimensions: confidence and empathy. Thus, in 1988, the researchers first developed a tool for evaluating the quality of services called SERVQUAL, which is the most valid measurement tool so far. In its original form, the SERVQUAL scale includes two main sections: "expectations" and "performance", which in the form of 22 components, evaluates five dimensions of "tangible factors", "reliability", "responsibility", "empathy" and "Assurance"(Zeithaml and Bitner, 2016).

SERVQUAL Model consists of two sections of expectations and perceptions. The expectations emphasize on how it should be and the perceptions emphasize on how it is. Quality is measured by calculating the difference in perceptual level scores and the expected level of learners from educational services. This is done through a 22-item questionnaire that measures the following five dimensions.

- **Tangible Factors:** include facilities and physical equipment, communication tool, and the beautification of the training center staff.
- **Reliability:** includes the ability of a training center in providing educational and recreational services committed for the trainees.
- **Accountability:** includes the ability of the training center in the regular implementation of the training programs at a specific time for the trainees.
- **Empathy:** includes the amount of attention and consideration of education center in solving the trainee’s issues during the course in a way that the trainee accepts that they are important for the organization and the organization understands it.



- **Assurance:** includes the ability to build the trust of the trainee to receive the desirable educational service in the next courses.

As mentioned, the model and its five dimensions are designed to measure the quality of the organization's products and services, but in this study, it is used to assess the quality of management training services. The reason for choosing this model is that firstly, all educational processes, which include input, process, output, and consequence, can be replaced, and secondly, it makes it possible to evaluate defined processes from different perspectives.

Chart 1 shows an overall image of the SERVQUAL conceptual model that is completed by the determinants of the quality of the educational services.

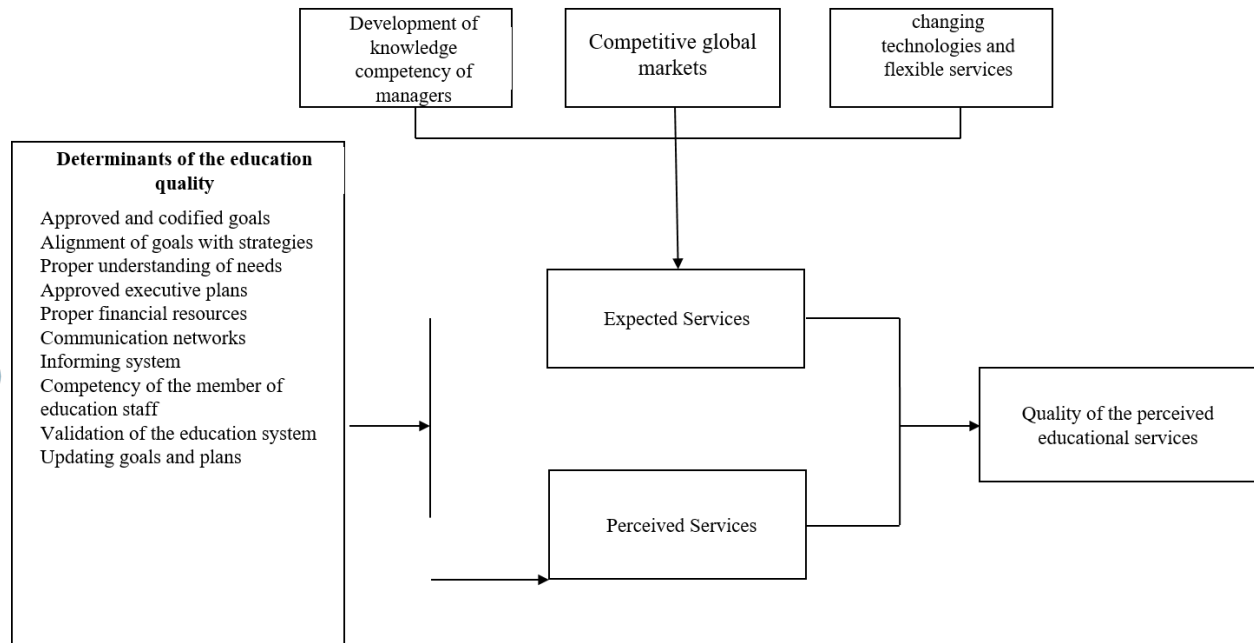


Chart 1. Effective factors in determining the quality of educational services

As can be seen, confirming the performance aspects of the SERVQUAL model to the educational processes mentions the quality of the training provided for the managers as the main factor in the competitive strategies of banks that must be analyzed. This concept is the result of comparing the expectations of the trainees from the training quality with the received training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is survey-descriptive. The research statistical population includes 60 managers of Mellat Bank branches in Gilan Province who attended the skill courses in 2018.

Since the considered population is limited, therefore, all the population is studied. Data collection was done using a standard questionnaire of SERVQUAL designed by Lai et al (2010). To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used that is obtained 91%, indicating acceptable reliability. To determine the validity of the questionnaire, the opinion of experts was also used that their recommendations and advice were applied in the questionnaire.

To describe the features of the studied population, the descriptive statistics were used and for the analysis of data, a two-sample t-test was used to recognize the different status of each one of the model aspects.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The distribution frequency of the statistical population is mentioned in Table 1. 82% of the statistical population is male and 18% are female. 42% of the managers of the branches have more than 10 years of job experience, indicating the expertise of the branch managers and their mental and physical preparation to learn new things. 60% of the statistical population also has a master's degree and higher, indicating knowledgeable ability of the bank structure and the essential need for the educational investment to improve and promote their working performance.

Table 1. Statistical features of the studied population

Demographic Characteristics		Person (Percentage)
Gender	Female	11 (18)
	Male	49 (82)
Education Level	Associate	5 (9)
	Bachelor	19 (32)
	Master	32 (53)
	Ph.D.	4 (6)
Work Experience	Up to 5 years	5 (9)
	5-10	4 (6)
	10-15	19 (31)
	15 and higher	32 (54)



To show the expectation of the managers of the branches from the quality of the services provided in the training center of Mellat Bank, the indices mentioned in Table 2 are used.

Table 2. The range of quality of educational services

Situation	Average Range
Lower than expectation	Current situation average <3
Average	Current situation average=3
Higher than expectation	3< current situation average

Based on the results of Table 3, all research hypotheses are confirmed and there are no significant differences between the expectations of the heads of branches and services provided at the bank's training center in each of the model dimensions. Accordingly, the highest

expectation is in accountability and the lowest in assurance. It seems that in terms of accountability, despite the great efforts of the executive staff of the training center in the regular and timely implementation of training programs, for reasons such as lack of proper facilities and equipment, has not been able to respond well in terms of scheduling courses. However, in terms of assurance, trainees, in terms of the total number of services received, have made a good assessment of the training center and the center has been able to gain the trust of trainees to continue to receive the appropriate services in future courses.

Table 3. Results of the hypotheses given for each one of the five dimensions of the education services quality

Dimensions of the quality of education services	Expectation	Performance	Expectation-performance gap
Tangible Factors	3.17	.85	+0.68
Reliability	3.01	3.78	+0.77
Accountability	3.36	3.92	+0.56
Empathy	3.14	3.94	+0.80
Assurance	3.17	4.01	+0.84

Table 4 shows the importance of each dimension of the SERVQUAL model in improving the quality of educational services from the perspective of branch managers. The findings show that the heads of the branches gave the highest score to the confidence level and the lowest score to the perceptual factor dimension. This prioritization can be used as a basis for determining the priorities and delays of quality improvement programs, and the training center can use the bank's resources more effectively by emphasizing the dimensions that have a higher priority.

Table 4. The degree of significance of each one of the SERVQUAL model according to trainees.

Subject	Significance degree
Tangible factors	20.97
Reliability	21.53
Accountability	21.44
Empathy	21.39
Assurance	21.67

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the current research, the quality of the services of the training center of Mellat Bank was investigated using the SERVQUAL model. The research findings in the dimension of tangible factors indicated that the heads of the branches expect more in terms of educational facilities and the bank needs to increase their satisfaction through establishing the facilities and proper support of the educational plans. In the dimension of reliability, the performance of the research center is acceptable, however, the review of the content of courses and fitting them with the needs can be effective in qualifying the training. In terms of accountability dimension, the interaction between the heads of branches and members of the educational staff has been lower than expected. Timely provision of educational equipment as well as using the

experienced experts with strong public affairs who have preferably executive experiences can be effective to meet the expectations. In terms of assurance dimension, the efforts of the executive staff of the research center in reforming the course problems and trying to provide the proper logistic services at the determined time can lead to the branches' managers' satisfaction and contribute to the effectiveness of the courses. In terms of empathy dimension, due to the total alignment of the educational programs with the goals and strategies of the bank, the heads of these branches felt that these courses met their expectations. According to the results of this research, it is recommended that using the perspectives and expectations of the managers of the branches, and the results of the quality of the educational programs, the standard of the quality of the skill educations be codified. It is also suggested to create criticism and suggestions system based on which, the reason and amount of problems can be found out and solved.

The results confirm that the expectations of the heads of the branches of Bank Mellat from the services provided in the training center of this bank have been largely met. Creating appropriate facilities and supporting educational programs, updating and using new educational technologies as much as possible, reviewing the titles and content of some courses, reviewing teaching methods and adapting programs to the real needs of the heads of the branches, the use of experienced teaching staff with records related to management areas and the correct and timely evaluation of the effectiveness of the training provided to heads of the branches are among the measures that can help further reduce the gap between branch heads' expectations of services received.



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