Internal Customer Service Quality Based on the SERVQUAL Model and Its Relationship with Job Satisfaction in a Heavy Freight Transportation Company in Metropolitan Lima, 2021

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research study is to determine the relationship between service quality and job satisfaction using the SERVQUAL model. Likewise, it seeks to determine the relationship between dimensions reliability, responsiveness, security, empathy, and tangible elements, and the variable job satisfaction. A methodology based on a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach was used, the level is descriptive-correlational, and the design is non-experimental and cross-sectional. The population consisted of 98 heavy truck drivers. Data were obtained through Likert-type scale surveys. The methods of analysis used were descriptive and correlational. Results indicate that the variables service quality and job satisfaction correlate positively and highly (0.783); therefore, it is concluded that internal customer service quality and all its dimensions are related to job satisfaction.

Keywords: service quality; internal customer; SERVQUAL model; job satisfaction; heavy freight transportation.

INTRODUCTION

Service quality in the framework of the SERVQUAL model and its relationship with user satisfaction has been the subject of on-going research: on the one hand, from the perspective of customer service in companies and, on the other, from the citizen's point of view in public management (Terán et al., 2021). Indeed, the variable of service quality is understood as the personal value judgment issued on what a customer expects or wants to receive and his/her perception of what he/she receives (Ganga et al., 2019), which, ultimately, could also be the perception of a collective.

The other research variable addresses job satisfaction, which is a construct related to the organizational dimension, that is, to the structure, people, and external relationships, be they customers, suppliers, or society. According to Drucker (2018), organizations could be competitive, or they could go into crisis because management was being conducted incorrectly or perhaps correctly, but unsuccessfully, in other words, detached from reality, the core, and the theory of the business.

In this context, job satisfaction for the company's employees will translate into a positive perception of the organizational culture and climate and, as in consequence, into a positive attitude towards their bosses, their jobs, and their salaries as appropriate to the sector of activity to which they belong. Therefore, it is essential to pay special attention to the needs of all those who work in the company and to direct actions toward fruitful labor relations that contribute to satisfactory work scenarios.

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It is well known that permanence in the market requires three things: first, of the company's environment; second, focus on the purpose of the organization, that is, on the business substrate; and, third, focus on the competencies that help to produce leaders (Drucker, 2018). These should be leaders in the organization, at their respective levels, who foster competencies for personal, relational, and organizational leadership.

For this research, master's and doctoral theses, and recent research articles on service quality based on the SERVQUAL model and job satisfaction in a heavy freight transportation company in Metropolitan Lima were reviewed.

In their master's thesis *Calidad de servicio al cliente en el transporte público urbano de la provincia del Cuzco* [Quality of customer service in urban public transport in the Province of Cuzco], Valdez et al. (2018) concluded that there is a positive relationship between the SERVQUAL model and customer perception; however, it is evident in the analysis of each of the dimensions that the customer is not completely satisfied, hence the need to improve the service, in line with what is offered. They conclude that strategic planning should be oriented towards listening more closely to the user regarding vehicle equipment, service hours, and especially staff training, to optimize the service.

In her doctoral thesis *La calidad del servicio según el modelo SERVQUAL y la fidelización del cliente en las agencias de viajes del distrito de Miraflores en el año 2019* [Service quality according to the SERVQUAL Model and customer loyalty in travel agencies in the District of Miraflores in 2019], Pierrend (2021) states that the SERVQUAL model provides the course of action to mitigate or reduce the existing gaps between what the company offers and what the customer receives, which in turn allows improving service quality. However, the results for each dimension of the model prove that customer loyalty is relative; thus, all administrative areas of the company should try to set up programs aimed at customer loyalty and the continuous search for service quality to prevent the customer-service relationship from becoming a mere transaction.

Similar to our research, in his master's thesis *Condiciones de trabajo y satisfacción laboral en conductores de una empresa de transporte de carga con base en Juliaca* 2020, [Working conditions and job satisfaction in drivers of a heavy freight transportation company based in Juliaca 2020], Huamaní (2021) used the "Job Satisfaction Scale" questionnaire developed by Sonia Palma in 2004

to measure this construct. Upon completing his research, he concludes that half of the workers perceive risks in working conditions, safety, hygiene, and ergonomics, while the other half are satisfied with job conditions. A further conclusion refers to the nature of the job, as the external factors represent a permanent risk while internally, workers perceive a lack of support. Most workers are dissatisfied with personal and/or social recognition, but satisfied with the economic dimension. It is noted that workers value peer support and recognition from their bosses, both of which are associated with job satisfaction.

The background information refers to the service quality focused on the external customer, which is truly important to maintain customer loyalty and, above all, to understand the customer's perception in order to improve the service quality and the company's sustainability. However, it is equally important to look inside the organization, the structure, processes, resources, and people; companies face the challenge of attracting workers with the qualifications required by the organization. Yet it is most crucial to ensure that workers remain and that turnover does not affect productivity. To this end, policies on communication, information, management of leisure time, and increasing the work horizon, among others, must be incorporated into the people management agenda.

The main objective of this research is to determine the relationship between service quality and job satisfaction of internal customers in a heavy freight transportation company in Lima in 2021. The specific objectives are to determine the relationship between the five dimensions of service quality: reliability (D1), responsiveness (D2), safety (D3), empathy (D4), tangible elements (D5) and job satisfaction of internal customers in a heavy freight transportation company in Lima in 2021. The specific objectives are to determine the relationship between the five dimensions of service quality: reliability (D1), responsiveness (D2), safety (D3), empathy (D4), tangible elements (D5) and job satisfaction of internal customers in a heavy freight transportation company in Lima in 2021. Therefore, we aim to investigate and obtain results on the service quality and job satisfaction of the internal customer, namely, the drivers of a heavy freight transportation company, who are responsible for transporting cargo from a point of origin to a destination.

Service Quality

Known as the Quality Guru, William Edwards Deming, creator of the method that bears his name,

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addressed a major issue that burdens organizations: the deadly diseases of quality management. Among them are the lack of consistency in objectives, short-termism, poor performance evaluation, constant turnover in top management that leads to discontinuity in projects, decision-making based only on figures, lack of prevention in workers' health, and customer complaints due to deficiencies in product quality that result in legal defense costs for the company (Deming, 1982). Regardless of the years that have passed, these problems persist. However, quality is intrinsic to the business philosophy and, as such, is part of its vision or prospects.

Following this vein, the study by Serrano et al. (2007) indicates the existence of two schools of research on service quality at the global level. One of them is the Nordic School, which supports the theory that *calidad es el resultado de la comparación entre el servicio esperado y recibido e identifica dos dimensiones a la hora de hablar de calidad de servicio: calidad técnica y calidad funcional* [quality is the result of the comparison between the service expected and received and identifies two dimensions when it comes to service quality: technical quality and functional quality] (Serrano et al., 2007, p. 39) and that the relationship between the two is essential to maintain the business image in line with quality. The second school of thought is the North American School, which is based on the contributions of Zeithaml et al. (1992), and can be summarized in three main principles: defining the service quality variable; creating the SERVQUAL scale instrument and typifying the five dimensions of the construct; and establishing the service quality model.

As noted by Serrano et al. (2007), Zeithaml et al. (1992) conducted studies prior 1991 to refine their service quality model. Once completed, they presented an empirical analysis of the model in which they determined five dimensions and left open the possibility of conducting further research to obtain information to improve service quality, a crucial matter in quality service management and, fundamentally, in business competitiveness.

In recent literature, emphasis continues to be placed on research on service quality in different areas and on those that analyze the service quality of the external customer, in other words, the customer's value judgment concerning the service received.

Along this line of thought, the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, such as reliability, responsiveness, security, empathy, and tangible elements, were focused on the external customer; however,

Kotler and Keller (2006) were the first to put integrated marketing on the agenda, stating the need to look inward first before focusing on the external customer. In this same sense, Sirvent et al. (2017) state that total quality consists of a look at the organization as a whole and its relationships with the environment, implying that the customer is also part of the organization, consisting of employees who occupy different positions.

Job Satisfaction

The analysis of job satisfaction focuses on the work environment of small, micro, or large companies, be they profit or non-profit organizations, where the organization has a purpose. To achieve this, companies must manage conceptual, human, and operational dimensions, each of which have specific roles to fulfill. The human dimension is one of the most relevant since it is only with human capital that the objectives of an organization can be achieved. Therefore, cross-cutting processes such as motivation, leadership, communication, trust management, and professional and personal recognition play such an important role.

The International Labor Organization (ILO), in its recent publication *Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, warns of the need to start building a prevention culture in workplaces consistent with the right to a safe and healthy working environment and, above all, to ensure that workers have access to the regulations on the rights and obligations of both parties (OIT, n.d.). Other issues advocated by the ILO include improving social factors for workers, reasserting the need for social dialogue, and laying the foundations for collective negotiation.

As previously mentioned, the study of job satisfaction is multifocal. For instance, in the framework of Psychosociology, it is understood as the affective response of a person to the different aspects of work life that respond to the circumstances of each individual and employer (Jaramillo & González, 2010). Similarly, Ross (1985), cited by Abrajan et al. (2009), emphasizes that satisfaction is in essence the correspondence between the person and his/her position in the organization. Ross states that job satisfaction can be intrinsic, because it is directly related to the work that the person performs and where he/she is satisfied; or extrinsic, because it is related to other dimensions of work such as compensation, well-being, and communication, among others.

According to Moya (2017), job satisfaction is a dimension of work that deserves special attention from managers, even more so in the heavy freight transportation sector, which has a high rate of turnover, which is a known indicator of the level of worker satisfaction that also impacts productivity. Consequently, managers must analyze the causes of job dissatisfaction and take corrective actions to improve the company's financial results. In other words, factors detrimental to worker job satisfaction must be identified to minimize their effects, which as stated by the ILO, are leisure management and occupational health and safety, including ergonomic issues, which are particularly relevant (OIT, n.d.).

Job satisfaction involves multiple aspects that relate to the worker, including their position at work and the conditions of the surrounding environment, that is to say, environment, safety, health, and leisure management, among other aspects. For organizations to grow, they must pay attention to people's motivations and interests. It is important, therefore, to determine the factors that influence the favorable or unfavorable perception of employee satisfaction.

Special mention should be made of the study conducted by Pujol-Cols and Dabos (2018) on the basis of research developed over the last twenty years (1996-2016), in which they review a number of studies in the quest to discover the determinants of job satisfaction. In their research, they found three approaches:

(i) Situational approach. Under to this approach, job design has a bearing on workspaces and, in turn, influences other dimensions of labor relations and therefore on the behavior of individuals. Hackman and Oldham (1976, as cited in Pujol-Cols & Dabos, 2018) develop concrete approaches that are summarized in five aspects intrinsic to work: skills, task identity, task meaningfulness, autonomy, and task feedback. This approach was considered biased for not considering extrinsic aspects of work (Pujol-Cols and Dabos, 2018). Additional studies should be performed.

(ii) Dispositional approach. According to this approach, a person's genetic essence which determines their behavior at work, and which plays an important role since it regulates a worker's ability to achieve effectiveness at work. Four personality traits are well established for the study of job satisfaction from the dispositional approach: self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal locus of control, and emotional stability. These traits show people's propensity to face situations with a positive outlook and decrease their predisposition to negativism (Judge et al., 1977, as cited in Pujol-Cols & Dabos, 2018).

(iii) Interactionist approach. The scholars who support this approach assume an eclectic position and combine both the situational approach and the dispositional approach, as they both explain job satisfaction; that is to say, it is as important to focus on the characteristics of the job as on the personality of the people who occupy them.

From the above, it can be seen that researchers have several options to continue analyzing and reviewing the most appropriate approaches to evaluate workers' job satisfaction, bearing in mind that the continued existence of organizations in the market and the generation of employment depend on them.

The Palma (2004) survey, already applied in other studies was used for the assessment. The survey comprises four dimensions: meaningfulness of the task, working conditions, personal and/or social recognition, and economic benefits.

Heavy Freight Transportation

This study focuses on job satisfaction in heavy freight road transportation, which has evolved significantly in the last few years. Its considerable development and competitiveness is the result of the efforts of several actors: the job satisfaction of drivers, the State through the maintenance and safety of transport routes, the companies in the sector that outsource their services, and the end consumers of the goods transported. Service quality will depend on the working conditions that companies offer their workers. It is an achievable goal (OIT, 2016).

On this issue, the ILO itself agrees that road transport of heavy cargo requires primary attention from those involved in the sector. It warns that there are not only economic risks, but also social and prestige risks, so it recommends the improvement and regulation of working hours and, in particular, ensuring mental health and providing them with "safe parking and rest areas" (OIT, 2016, p. 46), without neglecting the permanent monitoring of the service. In addition, programs aimed at continuous improvement of the weaknesses that are noticed should be adopted.

The SERVQUAL model developed and refined by Zeithaml et al. (1992) to measure service quality has been applied to external customers to determine their perceptions of the services provided. The contribution of this article lies in the fact that

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the SERVQUAL survey is administered to the company's internal customers, namely, to the drivers of heavy freight transportation of a company in Metropolitan Lima, thus identifying the reasons for turnover. Moreover, the survey is complemented by the job satisfaction survey. The results provide information on the degree of relationship between these two variables and, above all, confirm whether the SERVQUAL survey model can be applied to the internal customer. Finally, we aim to validate the advantages of this model for its replicability or adaptation to the reality of each population sample.

From a theoretical perspective, this study aims to determine the degree of relationship between internal customer service quality and job satisfaction, addressing aspects of theory related to administrative management. It also contributes to Management Sciences since it discusses a scarcely studied matter, such as service quality from the internal customer's point of view and its relationship with the job satisfaction variable.

From a practical perspective, the results provide elements for discussion for the managers of any organization interested in improving the job satisfaction of their workers consistent with the improvement of the quality of their service. The results can therefore serve as an argument and a basis for decision-making beyond the category in which it is set.

METHODOLOGY

This study is of a descriptive-correlational level and non-experimental design since it depicts environments and people as they manifest, describes an organizational context, and evaluates aspects of each variable under investigation (Vara, 2015). Additionally, as it aims to show associations between two or more variables, it is therefore correlational.

The sample size consisted of all 98 active drivers of a heavy cargo transportation company in Lima, Peru, to whom we had adequate and unrestricted access (Vara, 2015).

Two instruments were administered to the respondents. The first, based on the SERVQUAL methodology and adapted to the reality of the organization, measures perceptions and expectations of service quality. It has two sections of 28 items each and each section is distributed in five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, empathy, security, and tangible elements. The second instrument was taken from Palma (2004) and measures job satisfaction. It consists of 27 items distributed in four dimensions:

significance of the task, working conditions, personal and/or social recognition, and economic benefits. A 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = totally agree). The instruments were administered in person, on two different dates, with an interval of one week.

Expert judgment was used for validation. Reliability was measured through Cronbach's alpha, yielding values of 0.814 and 0.879 for service quality and job satisfaction, respectively. The results indicate internal consistency and reliability. Spearman's Rho was used for the hypothesis testing since the data presented a non-normal distribution, determined through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test.

RESULTS

The descriptive data yielded the following results:

Regarding the service quality variable (Figure 1), only 0.8% of the workers surveyed stated that they "totally agree"; 21.0% of them "totally agree"; 21.0% of them "agree"; 34.3% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; 40.2% of them "disagree"; and 3.7% of them "totally disagree."

Figure 2 shows the perceptions of the five dimensions of service quality. Regarding the reliability dimension (D_1), 38.8% of respondents stated that they "disagree"; 30.6% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; and 25.5% of them "agree." Only 2% stated that they "strongly agree" with the reliability dimension.

Regarding the responsiveness dimension (D_2), 35.7% of respondents stated that they "disagree"; 37.8% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; and 23.5% of them "agree" with their organization's responsiveness.

Regarding the safety dimension (D_3), 33.7% of the workers stated that they "disagree"; 45.9% of them "neither agreed nor disagree"; and 18.4% of them "agreed." It can be said that one out of five people had a positive perception of the safety dimension in their organization.

Regarding the empathy dimension (D_4), 39.8% of workers stated that they "disagree"; 32.7% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; 25.5% of them "agree"; and less than 1% stated that they "strongly agree." Therefore, it could be said that only one out of every four people surveyed had a favorable perception of empathy within their organization.
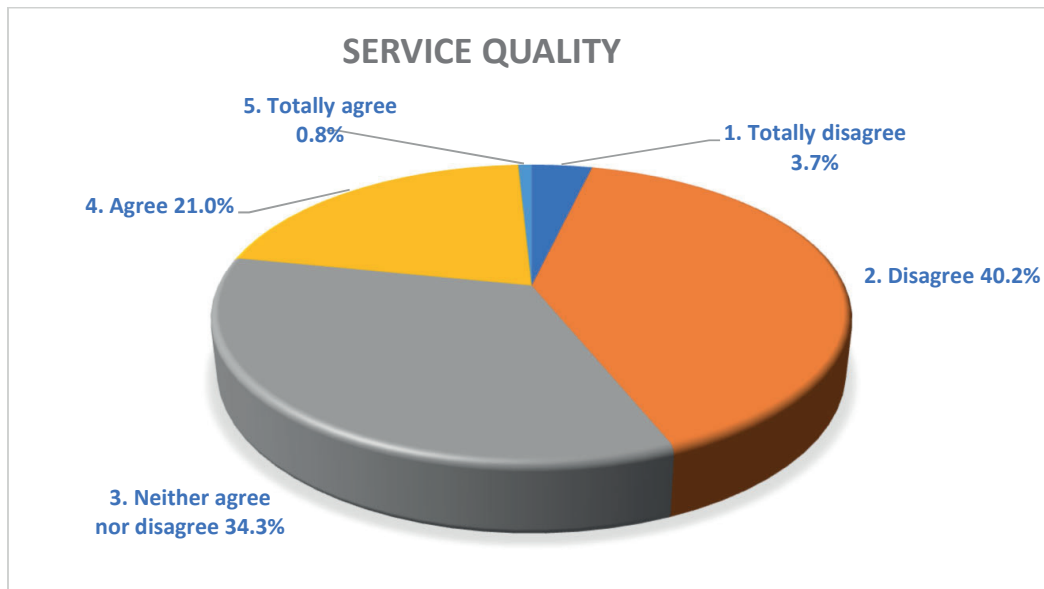
Figure 1. Workers' Perception of Service Quality Variable.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of the questionnaire applied in 2021.
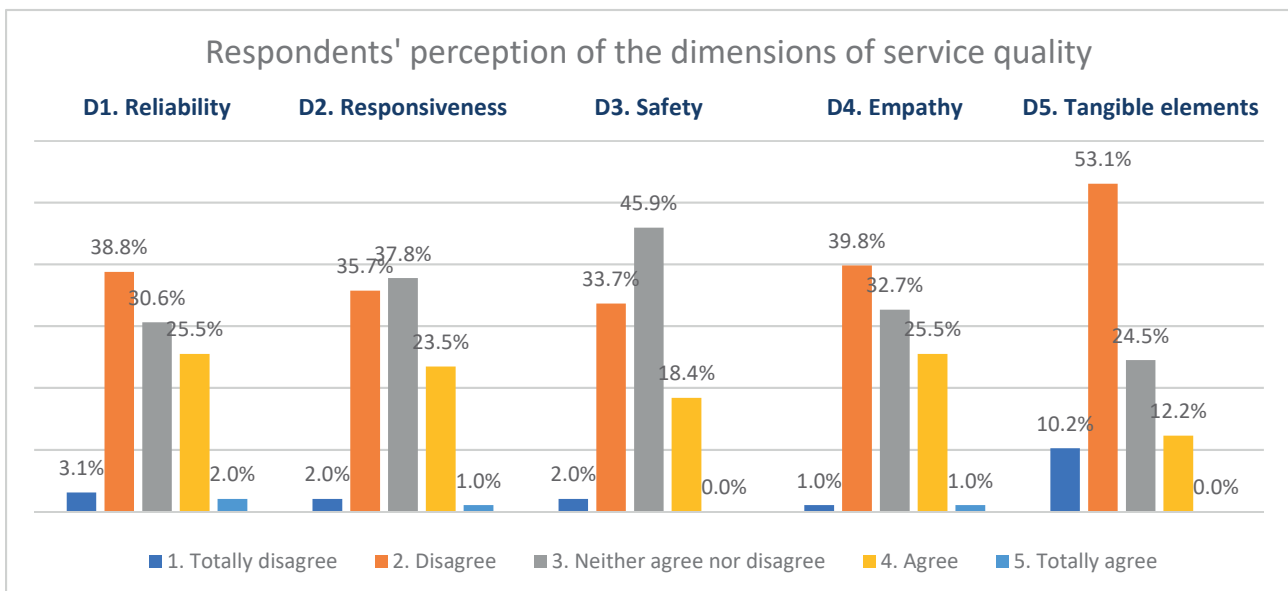

Figure 2. Worker's Perception of Dimensions D_1, D_2, D_3, D_4 and D_5 of the Service Quality Variable.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of the questionnaire applied in 2021.

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Regarding the tangible elements dimension (D_5), a difference is observed concerning the trend in the rest of the dimensions. A total of 10.2% of respondents stated that they "totally disagree"; 53.1% of them "disagree"; 24.5% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; and only 12.2% of them stated that they "agree" with the tangible elements in their organization.

Finally, regarding the job satisfaction variable (Figure 3), 9.2% of the workers surveyed stated that they "totally disagree"; 50.0% of them "disagree"; 24.5% of them "neither agree nor disagree"; 13.3% of them "agree"; and 3.1% of them "totally agree."

Gaps

Figure 4 shows the distribution of scores and gaps between perception and expectations for each service quality dimension. The largest gap is located in the tangible elements dimension with a score of −2.54, followed by security with −2.08, responsiveness with −2.04, empathy with -1.97, and reliability with −1.93. In addition, the gap of the service quality variable is observed at the end with a score of −2.11.

Hypothesis Testing

Service quality is related to the job satisfaction of internal customers in a heavy freight transportation organization in Lima in 2021.

Hypothesis

The main hypothesis testing of the variables service quality and job satisfaction is shown below:

H_0: r = 0

There is no significant relationship between service quality and job satisfaction.

H_1: r ≠ 0

There is a significant relationship between service quality and job satisfaction.

Table 1 shows that there is a high positive correlation of 0.7833 with a significance level of 0.001 between service quality and job satisfaction among internal customers (drivers) in the heavy freight transportation company in Lima, 2021.

Figure 5 shows the results of the correlations of each dimension (D_1, D_2, D_3, D_4, and D_5) of the service quality variable, and the job satisfaction variable, following the five specific hypothesis testing. A moderate positive correlation of 0.422 was found between the reliability dimension (D_1) and the job satisfaction variable in the internal customers of the heavy freight transportation organization. Similarly, a high positive correlation of 0.686 was found between the responsiveness dimension (D_2) and the

Figure 3. Workers' Perception of the Job Satisfaction Variable

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of the questionnaire applied in 2021.
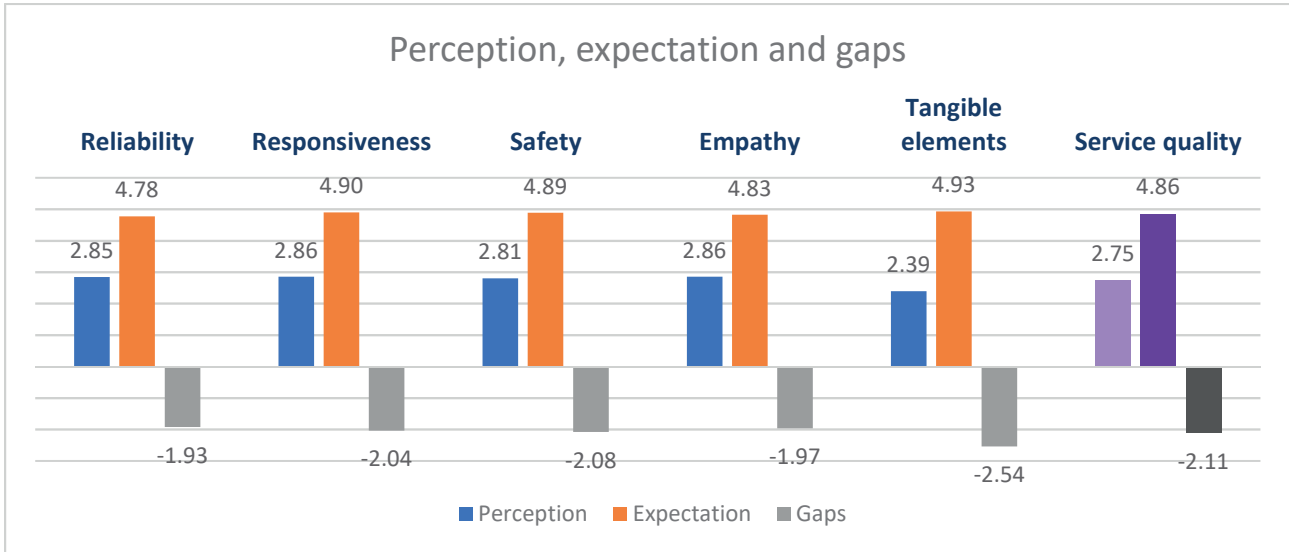
Perception, expectation and gaps

	Reliability	Responsiveness	Safety	Empathy	Tangible elements	Service quality
Expectation	4.78	4.90	4.89	4.83	4.93	4.86
Perception	2.85	2.86	2.81	2.86	2.39	2.75
Gaps	-1.93	-2.04	-2.08	-1.97	-2.54	-2.11

■ Perception ■ Expectation ■ Gaps

Figure 4. Perception Scores, Expectations, and Gaps in Service Quality Dimensions.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the results of the questionnaire applied in 2021.

Table 1. *Spearman's Rho Values for Service Quality and Job Satisfaction.*

	Value
Correlation Coefficient	0.7833
N	98
Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Source: Prepared by the authors based on results from SPSS V25 software.

Correlation of Dimensions D_1, D_2, D_3, D_4 y D_5 vs. Job Satisfaction (T. Spearman)

Very high correlation

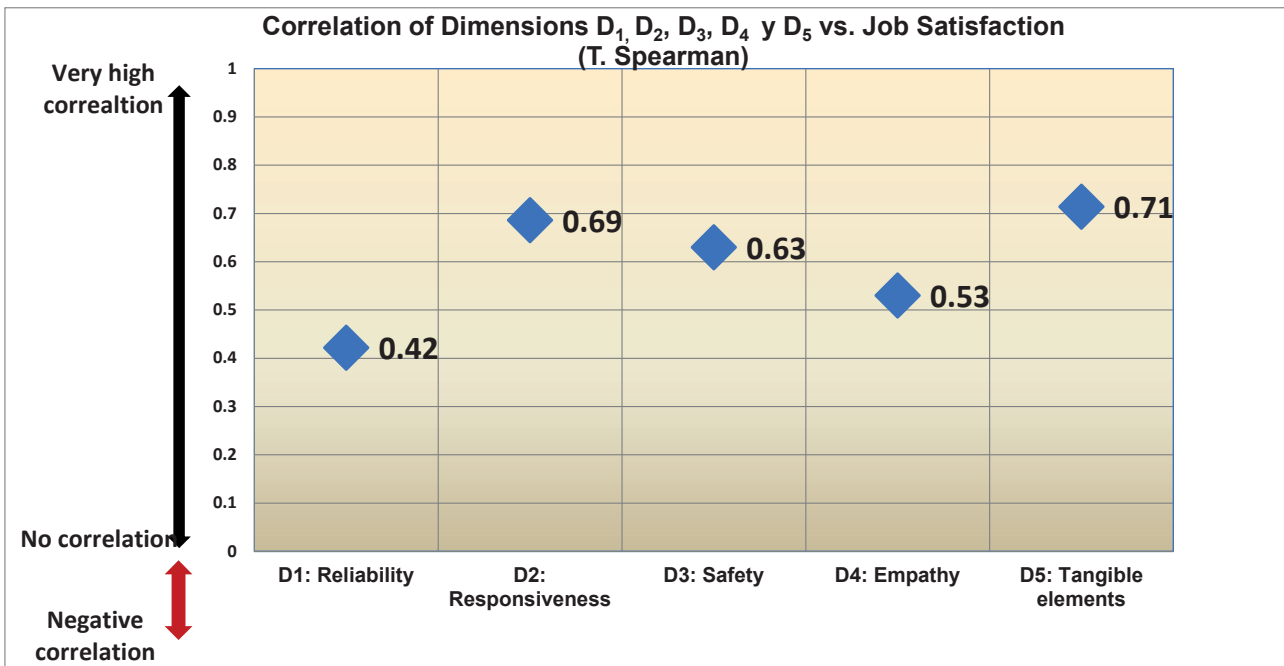|	
D1: Reliability	0.42
D2: Responsiveness	0.69
D3: Safety	0.63
D4: Empathy	0.53
D5: Tangible elements	0.71

No correlation

Negative correlation

Figure 5. Spearman's Rank Correlation Graph of the Dimensions of the Service Quality Variable vs. Job Satisfaction.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on results from SPSS V25 software.

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job satisfaction variable. A high positive correlation of 0.63 was found between the safety dimension (D_3) and the job satisfaction variable. A high positive correlation of 0.530 was found between the empathy dimension (D_4) and job satisfaction. Finally, a high positive correlation of 0.714 was found between the tangible elements dimension (D_5) and the job satisfaction variable. The five tests had a significance level of 0.01.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results obtained, validated through Spearman's Rho correlation test, a positive relationship was found between service quality towards internal customers and their job satisfaction. This result is consistent with that reported by Minjoon and Shaohan (2010), who found a significant relationship between the two variables. Moreover, Almohaimmeed (2019) identified internal customer service quality as the primary motivator of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, other components directly related to job satisfaction are addressed from different approaches (Pujol-Cols & Dabos, 2018).

Regarding the correlations of the five dimensions of service quality, reliability, responsiveness, security, empathy, and tangible elements, all of them showed a positive and significant correlation with job satisfaction. The tangible elements dimension had the highest value (0.714), while reliability had the lowest value (0.422). Therefore, it can be deduced that internal customers place the highest value on the tangible elements that the organization provides as part of service and that, given the results, have the greatest impact on their satisfaction. This context is also reflected at the level of descriptive results, as shown below.

Service quality and job satisfaction variables yielded descriptive results with similar trends. The categories "neither agree nor disagree" and "disagree" of both variables add up to 74%. In other words, only about a quarter of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of service provided by the organization and their jobs. The high percentage of undecided respondents also stands out; 34.3% for service quality and 24.5% for job satisfaction. This is probably due to distrust or lack of interest on the part of the respondents regarding the impact of the results.

The distribution of the service quality dimensions percentages also showed the same trend. However, in the tangible elements dimension (D5), the "disagree" category reached 53.1%. In other words, more than half of the respondents are dissatisfied

with this dimension, unlike the other four dimensions, which do not exceed 35%. This difference could be explained by the nature of the dimension, which is more objective and, therefore, more measurable than the previous ones.

Most research on service quality is focused on the perspective of the external customer. However, the service quality to the end customer can be impacted by internal conditions at the level of personal interrelationships or internal processes within the organization. At that point, the internal customer, the service quality provided by the organization, and their satisfaction play an important role (Minjoon & Shaohan, 2010).

It is, therefore, possible to depart from the premise that by providing better service quality to the internal customer, it is possible to improve the level of job satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2016) in such a way that it has an impact on the service quality to the external customer. A work environment with low levels of employee satisfaction can impact the service quality to the end customer.

The SERVQUAL model, the primary tool used in this study, has some limitations. Although it is widely used in various theoretical and practical fields, it has been criticized by several researchers, both for its application and approach. For Buttle (1996), the SERVQUAL model is not applicable in all situations, so it has had to be adapted successively, distorting the methodology.

Other researchers as Cronin and Taylor (1992) have attempted to design tests based on the SERVQUAL model and its various reviews. They argued that service quality measurements should only consider perceptions, not expectations. Their research, applied to four industries, showed that their technique (SERVPERF) provided excellent measurement results. However, this model did not have the same level of applicability as the SERVQUAL model.

Finally, the 5-point Likert-type scale used tends to exhibit a central homogeneity among respondents completing a self-assessment instrument. In other words, the responses show a trend toward neutral perceptions regarding the core concepts. This is due to indecision, indifference, or laziness (Mattar, 2001).

CONCLUSIONS

The research study shows that variables internal customer service quality and job satisfaction are correlated. It is concluded that the correlation

is high and positive at a value of 0.783. Although little research has been done on the relationship between internal customer service quality and job satisfaction, the results showed a significant relationship between the two variables from the perspective of internal customers, consistent with most of the studies conducted from the external customer perspective.

Regarding the first dimension, the research study shows a moderately positive relationship of 0.22 between reliability (D_1), and job satisfaction. It was found in the descriptive analysis that internal customers, specifically drivers, tend to perceive reliability as negative, as 42% "disagreed" with the reliability of their organization; 30.6% of them were neutral. However, 25.2% indicated that they "agreed."

Regarding the second dimension, the research study shows that a high and positive correlation exists between responsiveness (D_2) and job satisfaction with a value of 0.686. It was found in the descriptive analysis that internal customers tend to exhibit unfavorable perceptions. A total of 37.7% disagreed with responsiveness, and 37.8% held a neutral position. Only 23.5% agreed with the company's responsiveness.

Regarding the third dimension, the research shows that a significant relationship exists between safety (D_3) and job satisfaction with a value of 0.622. It was found in the descriptive analysis that internal customers tend to perceive this dimension unfavorably or indifferently. The two categories together accounted for 79.6%. Meanwhile, only 18.4% agreed with safety within the service quality of their company.

Regarding the fourth dimension, the research shows a significant positive relationship between empathy (D_4) and service quality with a value of 0.530. The descriptive analysis showed that, in general, the perception of internal customers was negative; 40.8% of the workers surveyed indicated that they disagreed with empathy as a service quality dimension within their organization. Meanwhile, 32.7% maintained a neutral position, and 26.5% expressed agreement.

Regarding the fifth dimension, the research shows that tangible elements (D_5) are significantly related to job satisfaction with a positive value of 0.71. It was found in the descriptive analysis that the general perception of internal customers was negative for 63.3% of the drivers, who indicated that they disagreed with the tangible elements dimension.

A neutral position was adopted by 24.5%, and only 12.2% expressed agreement.

Regarding job satisfaction, the results of the descriptive analysis showed that 59.2% of internal customers had a negative perception of their job. Only 21.8% stated they were satisfied with their job at their company. This suggests a scenario of dissatisfaction within the organization, which could be partly explained by deficient service quality, with negative gaps in all dimensions between workers' perceptions and their expectations. The largest gap was in the tangible elements dimension with a value of −2.54, above the remaining gaps, which fluctuated between −1.93 and −2.08.

Finally, given that various factors influence job satisfaction, the study demonstrates a significant relationship between the two variables. These results could serve as a basis for developing strategies to reduce the gaps aimed at improving the service quality for internal customers, the organization's most important asset, while also seeking to improve job satisfaction.

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