

# Towards Global Service Quality Dimensions: An Exploration of Commonality in Service Quality Measurement across Industries

Presented By

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# Agenda

- Introduction
- Conceptualizations of service quality (SQ)
- Mapping exercise and results
- Conclusions



# Background Of Services

- The **largest** and **fastest growing sector** in developed countries (E.g: Australia).
- Service industries contributed to **56%** of Australia's **economy** in 2004-05 (Trewin 2007).
- Service industries contributed to **75%** of Australia's **employment** in 2005-06 (Trewin 2007).



# What Is Service Quality?

- Conceptually, service quality is defined as the global overarching judgment or attitude relating to the overall excellence or superiority of the service (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml 1988).
- In layman's terms, it is about how well the **service level delivered** matches the **expectations** of the customer.



# Problems With Measuring Service Quality

- There has been considerable progress to how service quality perceptions should be measured but little advance as to *what* should be measured (Brady & Cronin 2001).
- Although it is apparent that the perceptions of service quality are based on multiple dimensions, there is no agreement as to the nature or content of these dimensions (Brady & Cronin 2001).
- Even within a particular industry (E.g: banking), there have been various SQ models consisting of varying number and content of dimensions.

Just to name a few...



# Motivations For Paper

- In-line with the initial intentions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1985, 1988) and given the variety of service quality attributes in the extant literature, it is timely to re-examine the service quality attributes with a view of classifying these attributes in a global model that would reflect a potential set of best practices that would facilitate the benchmarking of service quality across different industries and service types.
- This paper attempts to: (1) inventory existing service quality dimensions drawn from a variety of industries to discover commonality and exceptions across these industry-based conceptual models; (2) conduct a comparative mapping of the dimensions (attributes) of service quality against a well-known service quality model (SERVQUAL).

# Objectives Of Paper

1. Form an understanding of service quality dimensions that exist in the various industries.
2. Identify commonalities and exceptions that have or have not been encompassed by SERVQUAL(1988).
3. Identify any gaps within the industries' evaluation of service quality.



# Two Main Conceptualizations Of Service Quality

- The **Nordic School** (Gronroos 1982;1990).
  - Consists of 2 dimensions: (1) functional quality and (2) technical quality.
    - Functional quality – service delivery process
    - Technical quality – service quality outcomes
- The **North American School** (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml 1985;1988).
  - Consists of 5 dimensions: (1) responsiveness; (2) assurance; (3) tangibles; (4) empathy; and (5) reliability.
  - These 5 dimensions gave birth to a service quality measurement tool called 'SERVQUAL'.

# Background Of SERVQUAL

- **Development**

- Developed based on a set of focus group interviews of consumers and in-dept interviews of executives in four nationally recognized service firms.
- Their responses fell into ten key dimensions (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1985) which were later revised to five dimensions that are encompassed by 22 statements (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1988).
- Service quality measured using GAP (difference) scores
  - $GAP = PERCEPTIONS \text{ minus } EXPECTATIONS$

- **Purpose**

- The purpose of SERVQUAL is to provide a basic “skeleton” (group of core evaluation criteria) underlying service quality that would transcend multiple measurement contexts and provide managers with deeper insights concerning the areas (dimensions) for improvement.

# Transition Of SERVQUAL

**1985**

Competence

Courtesy

Credibility

Security

Communication

Access

Understanding the customer

Tangibles

Reliability

Responsiveness

**1988**

Assurance

Empathy

Tangibles

Reliability

Responsiveness

# Problems With SERVQUAL

- Over time, several researchers have tried to adopt the dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1988) to specific industries but have later **revised them** (either partially or totally) due to the unsuitability (Kilbourne et al. 2004).
- **Conceptual problems** including: (1) subtraction as a “simulation” of a psychological process; (2) ambiguity of the “expectations” construct; and (3) applicability issues of SERVQUAL across industries.
- **Empirical difficulties** including: (1) reliability, predictive and convergent validity problems with different scores; and (2) unstable dimensionality (Dyke, Kappelman and Prybutok 1997).
- SERVQUAL’s dimensions do not address the crucial questions of **what** needs to be reliable, assured, tangible, empathetic, responsive.

Just to name a few...

# Mapping Of Service Quality Dimensions

A definition-to-definition mapping exercise was conducted based on seven different service quality models (from 7 different industries) which were mapped onto SERVQUAL.

## Intentions

Comparing and classifying the service quality dimensions against the dimensions of SERVQUAL(1985; 1988).

## Purpose

The outcomes of such a mapping exercise would assist in identifying the commonalities and exceptions that SERVQUAL manage or did not manage to cover.

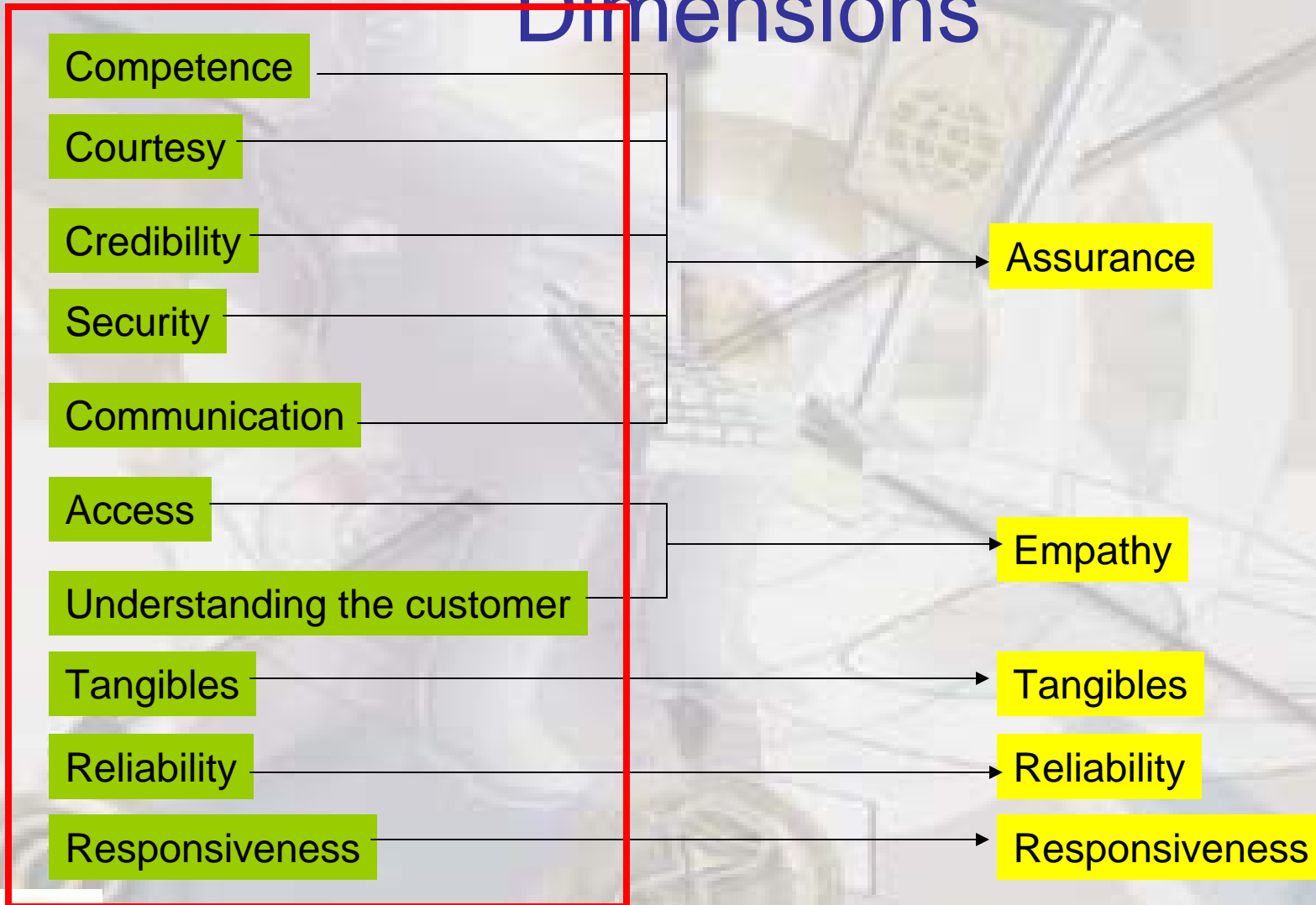
# Mapping Of Service Quality Dimensions - Example

Industry: Call Centers (Dean 2002)

Dimension	Definition
Adaptiveness	Ability to solve and help to interpret different customer problems and questions.

# Mapping Of Service Quality Dimensions

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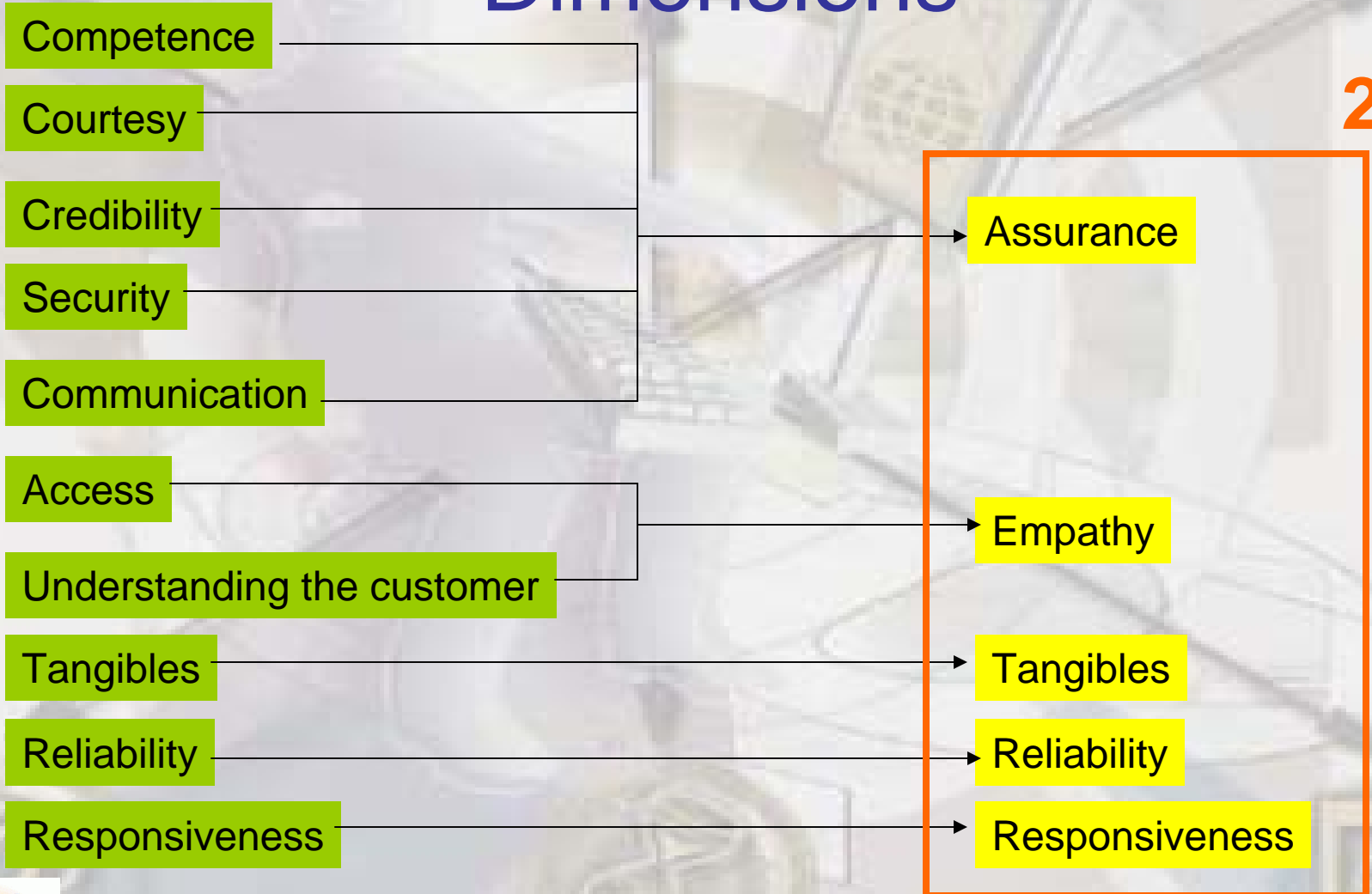
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SERVQUAL's (1985) 10 Dimensions	SERVQUAL's (1988) 5 Dimensions
Competence	

# Mapping Of Service Quality Dimensions



# Mapping Of Service Quality Dimensions - Example

Industry: Call Centers (Dean 2002)

Dimension	Definition
Adaptiveness	Ability to solve and help to interpret different customer problems and questions.

SERVQUAL's (1985) 10 Dimensions	SERVQUAL's (1988) 5 Dimensions
Competence	Assurance

# Mapping Results

<b>SERVQUAL's (1988) Dimensions</b>	<b>Industry Presence (Out Of 7 Industries)</b>
Assurance	7
Empathy	7
Reliability	5
Tangibles	3
Responsiveness	6

# Mapping Results

Unmapped Attributes	Suggested Classification
flexibility	-
efficiency	-
quality of information	Technical quality
effect of service	Technical quality
library as ba	Technical quality
collection and access	-
efficiency	-
incentive	-
cost / time	Technical quality

# Limitations

- This paper did not cover all available service quality literatures.
- The mappings of dimensions are based on the dimensions of SERVQUAL and seven different industries.
- The mapping exercise was solely attempted by the author and replication of the mapping exercise should be done to further validate the results.
- A seemingly “better” model (Brady & Cronin 2001) has recently come to light and the model seems to have addressed some of SERVQUAL’s shortfalls.

# Conclusions

- This paper attempts to highlight the global applicability of the five-dimensional SERVQUAL in seven different industries via the mapping exercise.
- From the results of the mapping exercise, it seems conclusive that only the '*assurance*' and '*empathy*' dimensions are global across the seven different industries while the other attributes seem to either map partially or did not map onto SERVQUAL's (1988) five dimensions.
- Some of the unmapped (unclassified) attributes seem to be able to be classified as technical quality attributes.
  - This is in-agreement with Kang (2006) who mentions that SERVQUAL focuses on the functional quality aspect but neglects the technical quality aspect.

# Future Directions

- A preliminary mapping exercise of dimensions (from seven industries) onto the Brady & Cronin (2001) model would be conducted with intentions of identifying commonality and global feasibility.



# Questions?



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# Summary

If you can't accurately measure it,  
you can't effectively manage it



# GOODBYE!!!



I've come to the  
end of my  
presentation and  
I thank you for  
your time.

Have a good day!



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