

## **Evaluating Service Quality of the Mobile Operator Mobilis Using the SERVPERF Model – A Study on a Sample of Mobilis Customers at the Laghouat Agency –**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

This study aims to evaluate the service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis in the Wilaya of Laghouat using the SERVPERF model. A field study was conducted on a randomly selected sample of 112 Mobilis customers in the region. The statistical software SPSS 26 was used to analyze the questionnaire data, present the results, and test the hypotheses.

The study found that the service quality delivered by the company under investigation—across its five SERVPERF dimensions (reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance)—met customer expectations.

**Keywords:** Service Quality, SERVPERF Model, Mobilis, Laghouat

**JEL Classification:** M31, M15

### **INTRODUCTION:**

In today's environment, organizations are striving to improve the quality of services they provide in order to ensure their survival and achieve their objectives amidst intense competition from other institutions. Mobilis, as a key sector with widespread national presence, continuously seeks to expand its customer base and increase its sales volume by focusing on the quality of its services.

The topic of service quality holds great importance for researchers, as it involves measuring service levels and identifying areas of deficiency. Among the most notable contributions to service quality measurement are those of **J. Cronin and Taylor (1992)**, which led to the development of the **SERVPERF model** for evaluating service quality.

Based on the above, the main research question can be formulated as follows:

## **What are the levels of service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis?**

This main question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **tangibility**?
- What is the level of service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **reliability**?
- What is the level of service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **responsiveness**?
- What is the level of service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **empathy**?
- What is the level of service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **assurance**?

### **Research Hypotheses:**

To answer the aforementioned research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

#### **Main Hypothesis**

The service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis meets customer expectations.

From this main hypothesis, the following sub-hypotheses are derived:

- The service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **tangibility** meets customer expectations.
- The service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **reliability** meets customer expectations.
- The service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **responsiveness** meets customer expectations.
- The service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **empathy** meets customer expectations.
- The service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **assurance** meets customer expectations.

#### **Significance of the Study:**

The importance of this study stems from the significance of service quality itself. Measuring and improving service quality has become essential for delivering high-quality services and expanding the customer base—especially in the context of growing competition.

**Objectives of the Study:** The study primarily aims to:

- Understand the theoretical frameworks related to service quality;
- Explore customer evaluations of the level of service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis.

#### **Methodology:**

The **descriptive-analytical method** was adopted as the most suitable for this type of research. The **descriptive approach** was used to present and explain the various concepts related to service quality in order to understand the theoretical foundations of the study. Meanwhile, the **analytical approach** was applied in the empirical part, relying on the **questionnaire** as an appropriate statistical tool to collect and analyze data, examine variables and hypotheses, and discuss the study's findings.

## Second: The Theoretical Framework of the Study

### Service Quality:

#### 1. The Concept of Service Quality:

Service quality is one of the key factors that institutions aim to enhance in order to achieve distinction, retain existing customers, and attract new ones by providing the best possible services. Before delving into the concept of service quality, it is essential to first define both "quality" and "service."

- **Definition of Quality:**

Quality is defined as “continuous improvement, excellence, or meeting customer requirements.” (Attallah & Bouhali, 2021, p. 356)

It is also defined as “a measure of the degree to which the delivered quality level matches the expectations of the beneficiary.” (Khellout & Chenchouna, 2019, p. 623)

- **Definition of Service:**

A service is defined as “any act or performance offered by one party to another, which is typically intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product.” (Noui, Boudouchen, & Gharbi, 2018, p. 132)

It is also described as “an intangible product that provides direct benefits to the customer through human or mechanical effort, and cannot be owned or physically consumed.” (Bounane, 2007, p. 58)

Accordingly, a service can be defined as an intangible product that cannot be physically owned or consumed and is offered by an institution to its customers.

- **Definition of Service Quality:**

Zeithaml and Berry define service quality as “the extent of discrepancy between customers' expectations, desires, and perceptions, and the actual performance of the service provided.” (Mokhtar, S., Maiyaki, A & Mohd Noor, N, 2011, p. 33)

Gronroos defines it as “the result of an evaluative process in which the customer compares the expected service with the service actually received.” (Grönroos, C, 1984, p. 37)

According to Payane, “service quality lies in the organization's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations, and it can be evaluated by measuring performance.” (Merazga & Makhlof, 2017, p. 388)

It is also defined as “the gap or deviation between what the customer expects and what they perceive after consumption.” (Haji, 2021, p. 521)

Another definition presents it as “a measure of the degree to which actual performance matches customers' expectations of the service, expressed mathematically as:

Service Quality = Perceived Performance – Customer Expectations.” (Ben Mhires & Al-Tawti, 2021, p. 606)

From the above, service quality can be defined as the alignment perceived by the customer between their expectations of service quality and the actual performance of the service provided.

## **2. The Importance of Service Quality:**

Having clarified the concept of service quality, we now turn to its significance. The main reasons for the growing attention to service quality include the following: (Khaldi & Gherche, 2021, p. 345)

- **Growth of the service sector:** There has been a continuous increase in the number of service-providing institutions more than ever before.
- **Increasing competition:** An institution’s survival depends on its ability to compete; providing high-quality services can grant it many competitive advantages.
- **Understanding customers:** Customers seek respectful treatment; it is not enough to offer quality services at a reasonable price without also ensuring good customer relations and deeper understanding.
- **Economic significance of service quality:** Service-oriented institutions now aim to broaden their customer base. This means institutions must not only attract new clients but also retain existing ones by focusing more on service quality.

## **3. Methods for Achieving Service Quality:**

Many institutions especially those in the service sector—strive to enhance and achieve high levels of service quality by employing a variety of methods and strategies, including: (Wenoughi & Yahiaoui, 2021, p. 387)

- Continuous use of research and studies;
- Analyzing customer complaints and resolving their issues promptly;
- Educating customers about the service;
- Attracting and hiring the most qualified personnel;
- Focusing on marketing programs.

## **4. The SERVPERF Model for Evaluating Service Quality:**

The SERVPERF model for service quality, developed by J. Cronin and Taylor (1992), emerged as a result of inconsistencies in earlier models. It measures service quality based on performance and the perception of the quality of services provided.

The model is built on five main dimensions, which are as follows: (Makhlouf, 2020, p. 43)

- **Tangibility:**

This refers to the extent to which the institution provides all necessary facilities and comforts for its customers, including human resources, physical equipment, and communication tools.

- **Reliability:**

This represents the customer's perception of the institution's ability to deliver services professionally, fulfill promises to customers, maintain credibility in word and action, and complete services accurately.

- **Responsiveness:**

This is the institution's ability and willingness to assist customers and promptly deliver services.

- **Empathy:**

This refers to the level of personal care and attention given to the customer. (Attallah & Bouhali, 2021, p. 358)

- **Assurance :**

This involves the efforts made by service providers to instill trust in customers and enhance the institution's image in their perception. (Ben Mhires & Al-Tawti, 2021, p. 606)

### **Third: The Applied Framework of the Study**

#### **❖ Study Population and Sample:**

The target population in this study consists of customers of the mobile operator Mobilis. Mobilis is a subsidiary of the Algeria Telecom Group and was the first mobile operator in Algeria, established in August 2003. It operates through 173 agencies nationwide, with over 82,965 indirect sales points and more than 5,000 coverage stations. The Mobilis network spans the entire national territory and aims to provide top-tier services, ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty, and stay aligned with technological advancements. (mobilis, 2024)

A random sample of 112 individuals was selected from the overall customer base of the institution under study. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, of which 112 were returned and deemed valid for analysis.

#### **❖ Statistical Methods Used:**

The data was analyzed and processed using SPSS version 26. To measure the validity and reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used. Means and standard deviations were employed to describe the characteristics of the sample and to test the hypotheses.

#### **❖ Study Instrument:**

The study relied on a **questionnaire** as the primary tool for data collection:

- **Section 1** of the questionnaire addressed the **demographic variables** of the respondents (Mobilis customers) and included six (6) questions: **gender, age, educational level, occupation, subscription type, and subscription duration.**
- **Section 2** included statements corresponding to the **five dimensions of service quality** as measured by the **SERVPERF model**:
  - **Tangibility:** Items (1–5)
  - **Reliability:** Items (6–10)
  - **Responsiveness:** Items (11–14)
  - **Empathy:** Items (15–18)
  - **Assurance:** Items (19–22)

A **five-point Likert scale** was used to evaluate responses, where the numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) correspond to:

**Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree**, respectively.

**Scale Range and Interpretation:**

- 1.00 to 1.80 → Strongly Disagree
- 1.81 to 2.60 → Disagree
- 2.61 to 3.40 → Neutral
- 3.41 to 4.20 → Agree
- 4.21 to 5.00 → Strongly Agree

❖ **Questionnaire Reliability Test:**

The reliability of the questionnaire refers to its consistency and stability, meaning the tool should produce similar results if administered to the same sample under similar conditions. To verify this, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient was calculated using SPSS v26, and the following table presents the coefficient values for all study dimensions in detail.

**Table (01): Cronbach’s Alpha Test Results for the Study Variables**

| Reliability Statistics |                 |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha       | Number of Items |
| 0.921                  | 22              |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

From the table, it is evident that the overall Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is 0.921, indicating that the measurement instrument has a high level of reliability for the study sample. This reflects the stability of

the scale and its internal consistency, meaning it would yield similar results if reapplied to the same sample under similar conditions.

Therefore, the questionnaire can be considered a reliable tool for measuring the dimensions of the study, as it provides consistent results aligned with respondents' answers over time. This also supports the generalizability of the questionnaire's results to the entire study population—namely, all Mobilis customers in Laghouat.

## Second: Analysis of the Study Results

The data collected from the field study will be analyzed to extract the results. The analysis will begin with a presentation of the demographic characteristics of the study sample, followed by the presentation and discussion of respondents' answers regarding the dimensions and variables of the study.

### 1. Characteristics of the Study Sample

**Table (02): Characteristics of the Sample**

| Variable                     | Category               | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>Gender</b>                | Male                   | 67        | 59.8           |
|                              | Female                 | 45        | 40.2           |
| <b>Age</b>                   | Under 30 years         | 36        | 32.1           |
|                              | 30–39 years            | 43        | 38.4           |
|                              | 40–49 years            | 23        | 20.5           |
|                              | 50 years and above     | 10        | 8.9            |
| <b>Educational Level</b>     | Secondary or below     | 50        | 44.6           |
|                              | University             | 49        | 43.8           |
|                              | Postgraduate           | 13        | 11.6           |
| <b>Occupation</b>            | Employee               | 65        | 58             |
|                              | Retired                | 5         | 4.5            |
|                              | Self-employed          | 19        | 17             |
|                              | Unemployed             | 23        | 20.5           |
| <b>Subscription Type</b>     | Postpaid               | 50        | 44.6           |
|                              | Prepaid                | 62        | 55.4           |
| <b>Subscription Duration</b> | Less than 1 year       | 5         | 4.5            |
|                              | 1 to less than 4 years | 29        | 25.9           |
|                              | 4 to less than 6 years | 15        | 13.4           |
|                              | 6 years and above      | 63        | 56.3           |

Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output

The sample consisted of **112 individuals**, distributed according to their personal information as follows:

- **59.8% were male** and **40.2% were female**, indicating that the proportion of males slightly exceeds that of females.
- The most represented **age group** was those aged **30 to 39 years**, accounting for **38.4%**, which reflects significant engagement from the younger demographic.
- In terms of **educational level**, individuals with a **secondary education or lower** represented the highest proportion at **44.6%**, followed closely by **university-level education** at **43.8%**, indicating that the institution’s customers come from various educational backgrounds.
- Regarding **occupation**, **employees** constituted the largest group, making up **58%** of the sample.
- In terms of **subscription type**, **prepaid subscriptions** were the most common, accounting for **55.4%**.
- As for **subscription duration**, the largest portion—**56.3%**—had been subscribed for **six years or more**, indicating that the institution has a strong and established customer base.

## 2. Respondents’ Attitudes Toward the Study Dimensions:

### 1. Tangibility Dimension:

The results regarding the perceptions of the study sample (customers of the institution under study) on the tangibility dimension were as follows:

**Table (03): Respondents’ Attitudes Toward the Items of the First Dimension "Tangibility"**

| Statements   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Direction | Rank |
|--|------|--------------------|-----------|------|
| Mobilis has a modern and attractive interior and exterior design.                          | 4.20 | 0.77               | Agree     | 1    |
| The company possesses modern and advanced technological equipment to provide its services. | 4.12 | 0.76               | Agree     | 2    |
| Employees at the company pay attention to their appearance.                                | 4.07 | 0.89               | Agree     | 3    |
| Employees adhere to scheduled appointments.  | 4.07 | 0.89               | Agree     | 3    |

|  |             |             |              |   |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|---|
| The agency's location is convenient and easily accessible. | 3.97        | 0.88        | Agree        | 4 |
| <b>Tangibility</b>   | <b>4.09</b> | <b>0.60</b> | <b>Agree</b> |   |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

Based on Table (03), it is observed that all items related to the tangibility dimension received agreement from the study sample. This includes statements concerning the design, the company's possession of modern technological equipment, employees' attention to their appearance, their adherence to scheduled appointments, and the agency's accessible location all of which were rated as meeting customer expectations. This supports the acceptance of the first sub-hypothesis, **which states that the service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis in terms of tangibility meets customer expectations.**

## 2. Reliability Dimension:

he results regarding the perceptions of the study sample (Mobilis customers) on the reliability dimension were as follows:

**Table (04): Respondents' Attitudes Toward the Items of the Second Dimension "Reliability"**

| Statements  | Mean        | Standard Deviation | Direction    | Rank |
|---|-------------|--------------------|--------------|------|
| Employees always strive to provide services properly.                     | 4.20        | 0.76               | Agree        | 1    |
| Employees have full knowledge of various inquiries                        | 4.12        | 0.81               | Agree        | 2    |
| Network coverage is good in all areas.                                    | 2.67        | 1.18               | Neutral      | 5    |
| Services are delivered with the required accuracy and in a timely manner. | 3.78        | 0.92               | Agree        | 4    |
| I receive the same services as advertised.                                | 3.81        | 1.00               | Agree        | 3    |
| <b>Reliability</b>  | <b>3.72</b> | <b>0.64</b>        | <b>Agree</b> |      |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

Based on Table (04), it is observed that the reliability dimension was generally agreed upon by the study sample. Statements related to employees consistently delivering services properly, their full knowledge of customer inquiries, accurate and timely service delivery, and the alignment between advertised and actual services were all rated as meeting customer expectations. However, the statement regarding network coverage in all areas did not meet expectations. Therefore, the second sub-hypothesis which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of reliability meets customer expectations is confirmed.

### 3. Responsiveness Dimension:

The results regarding the perceptions of the study sample (Mobilis customers) on the responsiveness dimension were as follows:

**Table (05): Respondents' Attitudes Toward the Items of the Third Dimension "Responsiveness"**

| Statements   | Mean        | Standard Deviation | Direction    | Rank |
|--|-------------|--------------------|--------------|------|
| The company has a sufficient number of employees to deliver its services.            | 3.76        | 0.99               | Agree        | 3    |
| The company responds promptly and quickly to customer complaints and inquiries.      | 3.73        | 0.98               | Agree        | 4    |
| Employees show friendliness and smiles when dealing with customers.                  | 4.04        | 0.86               | Agree        | 1    |
| Employees are keen to provide advice to help customers choose the appropriate offer. | 3.92        | 0.97               | Agree        | 2    |
| <b>Responsiveness</b>  | <b>3.86</b> | <b>0.71</b>        | <b>Agree</b> |      |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

Based on Table (05), it is observed that the responsiveness dimension was met with agreement from the respondents. All related statements including the adequacy of staffing, the prompt response to complaints and inquiries, employee friendliness and smiles, and their commitment to providing helpful advice for choosing suitable offers were rated as meeting customer expectations. This confirms the third sub-hypothesis, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of responsiveness meets customer expectations.

#### 4. Empathy Dimension:

The results regarding the perceptions of the study sample (Mobilis customers) on the empathy dimension were as follows:

**Table (06): Respondents' Attitudes Toward the Items of the Fourth Dimension "Empathy"**

| Statements  | Mean        | Standard Deviation | Direction             | Rank |
|---|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------|
| Working hours are convenient for all customers.   | 4.27        | 0.73               | Strongly Agree        | 3    |
| The company contacts its customers to inform them about new services.                       | 3.98        | 1.03               | Agree                 | 4    |
| Employees speak to customers in the language and dialect they understand.                   | 4.39        | 0.66               | Strongly Agree        | 2    |
| Employees are characterized by politeness and respect in their interactions with customers. | 4.40        | 0.61               | Strongly Agree        | 1    |
| <b>Empathy</b>  | <b>4.26</b> | <b>0.59</b>        | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |      |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

Based on **Table (06)**, it is observed that the **empathy dimension** received a **strongly agree** rating from respondents. Statements regarding the convenience of working hours, ease of communication between employees and customers, and the politeness and respect shown by employees were all rated as **strongly meeting customer expectations**. The statement about the company contacting its customers to inform them of new offers received an **agree** rating, which still reflects alignment with customer expectations.

These results confirm the **fourth sub-hypothesis**, which states that the **service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis in terms of empathy meets customer expectations**.

#### 5. Assurance Dimension:

The results regarding the perceptions of the study sample (Mobilis customers) on the assurance dimension were as follows:

**Table (07): Respondents' Attitudes Toward the Items of the Fifth Dimension "Assurance"**

| Statements   | Mean        | Standard Deviation | Direction      | Rank |
|--|-------------|--------------------|----------------|------|
| I feel comfortable and reassured when dealing with all employees in the company.     | 3.98        | 0.89               | Agree          | 4    |
| The company is equipped with the necessary safety and security facilities.           | 4.22        | 0.79               | Strongly Agree | 2    |
| The company's management handles customer information with complete confidentiality. | 4.07        | 0.81               | Agree          | 3    |
| Customers feel safe and have full confidence in all their dealings with the company. | 4.32        | 0.71               | Strongly Agree | 1    |
| <b>Assurance</b>   | <b>4.15</b> | <b>0.63</b>        | <b>Agree</b>   |      |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

Based on **Table (07)**, it is observed that the **assurance dimension** received an overall rating of "**agree**" from respondents. Statements related to the availability of necessary safety and security equipment and customers' sense of safety with employees were rated as **strongly agree**, while statements concerning customers' comfort and the confidentiality of their information were rated as **agree** all indicating alignment with customer expectations.

This confirms the **fifth sub-hypothesis**, which states that the **service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis in terms of assurance meets customer expectations**.

#### **6. Overall Evaluation of Service Quality Based on the SERVPERF Model:**

The results related to the perceptions of the study sample (Mobilis customers) regarding the SERVPERF model as a whole were as follows:

**Table (08): SERVPERF Model Evaluation**

| Dimension             | Mean        | Standard Deviation | Direction      | Rank |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------|------|
| Tangibility           | 4.09        | 0.60               | Agree          | 3    |
| Reliability           | 3.72        | 0.64               | Agree          | 5    |
| Responsiveness        | 3.86        | 0.71               | Agree          | 4    |
| Empathy               | 4.26        | 0.59               | Strongly Agree | 1    |
| Assurance             | 4.15        | 0.63               | Agree          | 2    |
| <b>SERVPERF Model</b> | <b>4.02</b> | <b>0.64</b>        | <b>Agree</b>   |      |

**Source: Prepared by the researchers based on SPSS V26 output**

From **Table (08)**, it is observed that the **average score of service quality** according to the **SERVPERF model** was **4.02**, which corresponds to the “**agree**” level. This indicates that the service quality provided is in line with the expectations of the study sample.

This confirms the **main hypothesis**, which states that: **The service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis meets customer expectations.**

### **CONCLUSION:**

Through our study on the evaluation of service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis using the SERVPERF model (a study on a sample of Mobilis customers at the Laghouat agency), it can be concluded that measuring and evaluating service quality plays a fundamental and vital role in enhancing the institution's position. This is achieved by focusing on the outcomes of service quality measurement to improve the services offered to customers in order to gain their satisfaction, strengthen their loyalty, and thereby expand market share. Accordingly, it has become essential for institutions to place great importance on improving service quality as a strategic objective to ensure the achievement of their goals, and customer loyalty and satisfaction especially in light of the rapid changes and transformations in the labor market.

The main findings of this study are as follows:

- Service quality is the alignment perceived by the customer between their expectations of service quality and the actual performance of the service delivered.

- Acceptance of the **first sub-hypothesis**, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **tangibility** meets customer expectations.
- Acceptance of the **second sub-hypothesis**, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **reliability** meets customer expectations.
- Acceptance of the **third sub-hypothesis**, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **responsiveness** meets customer expectations.
- Acceptance of the **fourth sub-hypothesis**, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **empathy** meets customer expectations.
- Acceptance of the **fifth sub-hypothesis**, which states that the service quality provided by Mobilis in terms of **assurance** meets customer expectations.
- Acceptance of the **main hypothesis**, which states that the overall service quality provided by the mobile operator Mobilis meets customer expectations.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions:**

In light of the study's results, a set of key recommendations has been formulated as follows:

- The need to improve network coverage across all regions without exception.
- Continuously update the technologies used in service provision.
- Ensure attractive and modern interior and exterior designs of the company's agencies nationwide.
- Enhance the speed of response to customer complaints through various modern digital communication channels.
- Provide ongoing training for employees in effective communication skills.
- Offer sustainable training programs aligned with current technological advancements.
- Develop an efficient system for handling customer complaints.
- Simplify service delivery procedures while maintaining quality.
- Utilize artificial intelligence to handle customer inquiries effectively.

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