

SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS

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Abstract

The capability of service providers to plan and implement the quality components in executing daily job may have a significant impact on customer loyalty. However, the role of service quality as an important determinant has been given less attention in the workplace quality research literature. Therefore, this study was undertaken to measure the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. A survey method was employed to collect data from Malaysian soldiers who involved in peacekeeping missions at Middle Eastern country. The outcomes of SmartPLS path model analysis demonstrate that the ability of organization to appropriately implement tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy in executing daily job has been important determinants of customer loyalty. Further, this study provides discussion, implications and conclusion.

Keywords: Service quality, customer loyalty, peacekeeping missions, Middle Eastern country.

Introduction

Service quality is an important issue widely discussed in quality management, marketing and organizational disciplines. It is an abstract and elusive concept because it involves three distinctive characteristics: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985; 1988; Zeithaml, 1988). The distinctive service quality construct opposes the objective quality which emphasizes on validating and measuring physical features of a product or good (Brady & Cronin, 2010; Kitapci, Dortyol, Yaman, & Gulmez, 2013).

In a quality management literature, service quality is often perceived as a long-run overall assessment of service at multiple levels in an organization (Azman, Ilyani & Nur Afiqah, 2016; Brady & Cronin, 2010; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988; Sureshchandar, Rajendran, & Anantharaman, 2002). In this assessment, customers will try to match their expectations of the service (i.e., service firms should offer) with their experiences of the service that they have

received before (i.e., performance of firms providing the services). If customers feel that the services have met their expectations this will show that the quality of service is achieved (Brady & Cronin, 2010; Gronroos, 2007; Kitapci, Akdogan, & Dortyol, 2014). Consequently, this situation may help organizations to improve business success, upgrade image and enhance competitiveness in an era of global economy and turbulent time (Tue, 2014; Azman *et al.*, 2016; Singh, Feng, & Smith, 2006; Kaziliūnas, 2010).

A review of the current literature pertaining to customer-organization relationship show that service quality deals with two interrelated activities: how an organization delivers services to customers and what customers received from services provided by an organization (Gronroos, 2007; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; 1988). In a well-established service organization literature, the service quality construct has extensively been measured using Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988) and Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml (1990) SERVQUAL scale, which consists of five distinguishable contexts consist of: 1) tangible (physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of workers), 2)

reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), 3) responsiveness (willingness to help customer and provide prompt service), 4) assurance (knowledge and courtesy of workers and their abilities to inspire trust and confidence), and 5) empathy (caring, individualized attention the organization provides its customers).

In service quality studies published from 20th till 21st centuries reveal that Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988; 1990) SERVQUAL scale is still relevant and has received more attention by contemporary researchers and managers to assess perceived quality in organizations (Edvardsson, 1998; Kitapci *et al.*, 2013). From a theoretical point of view, this model guides researchers to easily understand service quality components (Kitapci *et al.*, 2013; Kuei & Lu, 1997), and measure the effectiveness of service quality in the service type organizations (Azman, Norazila, Ahmad, & Rosnan, 2014; Kang & James, 2004; Malhotra, Ulgado, Agarwal, Shainesh, & Wu, 2005). While, from a practitioner's point of view, many managers feel comfortable to use the model because it mentions clear criteria, ease of applying, ability to adjust as it does not involve complicated theories, and results obtained from the instrument may be used to determine the vision and mission of an organization (Abu-El Samen, Akroush & Abu-Lail, 2013, Asubonteng, McCleary & Swan, 1996; Wisniewski, 2001).

Problem Statement

Interestingly, a thorough review of the recent quality management literature highlights that the ability of service providers to appropriately implement tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy in executing daily job may have a significant and different impact on customer outcomes, especially loyalty (Izogo and Ogba, 2015; Kondasani & Panda, 2015). In a customer behaviour perspective, customers' loyalty is generally viewed based on three distinctive approaches: 1) behavioural measurement (i.e., consistent and repetitious purchase behaviour), 2) attitudinal measurement (i.e., emotional and psychological data that indicate engagement and allegiance), and 3) composite measurements (i.e., combine the first two approaches and customers' service preferences, propensity of brand-switching, frequency of purchase and total amount of purchase). Among these approaches, the composite measurement is found to substantially increase the meaning of customer loyalty (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Ganesh, Arnold, & Reynolds, 2000). For example, high customer

loyalty to a service is normally expressed by them in terms of repeat patronage; self-stated retention, price insensitivity, resistance to counter persuasion, and the likelihood of spreading positive word-of-mouth and repurchase intention (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Butcher, 2001; Ganesh *et al.*, 2000; Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2007; Kitapci *et al.*, 2013).

Within a workplace quality model, many scholars state that service quality and customer loyalty are different, but strongly interrelated constructs. For example, the ability of service providers to appropriately implement service quality in executing daily job may lead to greater customer loyalty (Bloemer, 1998; Caruana, 2002; Chakravarty, 2004). Although the nature of this relationship is significant, the role of customer satisfaction as an important determinant has been less emphasized in the service quality research literature. Researchers have argued that this situation is mainly due to excessive explanations on the conceptual definitions, disconfirmation paradigms and significance of the service quality in various organizational settings (Brady & Cronin, 2010; Chang, 2008; Gronroos, 2007; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1990). Besides, previous studies have employed simple survey, association and gap analysis methods to examine customer attitudes toward different service quality practices, and strength of correlation between different service quality practices and general customer outcomes (Bei & Chiao, 2006; Kitapci *et al.*, 2013). As a result, these studies have provided inadequate and general findings to be used as important guidelines by practitioners in understanding the complexity of service quality construct, and formulating action plans to enhance the performance of service quality in agile organizations (Kashif, Shukran, Rehman, & Sarifuddin (2015); Kitapci *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, this situation encourages the researcher to advance discover the nature of this relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty. Subsequently, this study carries five major objectives: first, is to examine the relationship between tangible and customer loyalty. Second, is to examine the relationship between reliability and customer loyalty. Third, is to examine the relationship between responsiveness and customer loyalty. Fourth, is to examine the relationship between assurance and customer loyalty. Finally, is to examine the relationship between empathy and customer loyalty.

Literature Review

Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988; 1990) SERVQUAL model explain that if a customer feels that services that he/she receives meets his/ her expectations, this may lead to greater positive customer behaviour. The notion of this theory has obtained strong support from the service quality research literature. Loyalty refers to a favourable attitude towards a brand in addition to purchasing it repeatedly (Day, 1969); a relationship between relative attitude towards an entity and repeat patronage behaviour (Dick & Basu, 1994); a situation when repeat purchase behaviour is accompanied by a psychological bond (Jarvis & Wilcox, 1977); and repeat purchase intentions and behaviours (Peter & Olson, 1990). Customer loyalty is generally described as occurring when customers repeatedly purchase a good or service over time and customers hold favourable attitudes towards a good or service, or towards the company supplying the good or service.

Loyalty is defined as “an intention to perform a diverse set of behaviour that signal a motivation to maintain a relationship with the focal firm, including allocating a higher share of the category wallet to the specific service provider, engaging in positive word of-mouth, and repeat purchasing” (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002). While, customer loyalty is defined as a held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product consistently in the future (Ganesh *et al.*, 2000; Jamal & Anastasiadou, 2007; Oliver, 1999; Stank, Goldsby, & Vickery, 1999; Stank, Goldsby, & Vickery, Savitskie, 2003).

Most service quality studies have examined the association between service quality and customer loyalty in one specific service industry (e.g., hospital, hotel and retailing), but they have successfully highlighted the influence of Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988; 1990) SERVQUAL model in enhancing customer loyalty. For example, Wong and Sohal (2002) evaluated a service quality using 1,261 external customers at a large chain departmental store in Victoria, Australia. This study showed that the capability of organization to appropriately implement tangible, assurance and empathy in providing services had invoked customer loyalty. Meanwhile, Lei and Jolibert (2012) assessed a service quality using 630 responses (150 in the first phase and 480 in the second phase) at Chinese healthcare system. They found that tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy had been important determinants of customer loyalty. While, Chodzaza and Gombachika (2013) examined a service quality using 286 industrial customers of the public electricity utility in the Southern Region of Malawi. This study found that the

competency of organization to appropriately implement tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy had been an important determinant of customer loyalty.

In addition, Izogo and Ogba (2015) conducted a study about service quality using 384 customers at automobile repair services firms at Ebonyi State in Negeria. This study advocated that the competency of organization to appropriately implement tangible, reliability, responsiveness and empathy had enhanced customer loyalty. Further, Kondasani and Panda (2015) assessed a service quality effectiveness using 475 patients at five Indian private hospitals. This study found that the competency of organization to appropriately practice responsiveness, assurance and empathy had led to higher customer loyalty. These empirical evidences recognized that the importance of service quality components in service organizations and the capability of these organizations to appropriately practice these quality components in providing services can lead to an enhanced customer loyalty. In this study, the operationalization of the SERVQUAL is modified from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988; 1990) SERVQUAL scale that consists of five important sub-components namely: (1) tangible, (2) reliability, (3) responsiveness, (4) assurance, (5) and empathy and their relationship with customer loyalty as shown in Figure 1. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

- H_1 : There is a positive relationship between tangible and customer loyalty.
- H_2 : There is a positive relationship between reliability and customer loyalty.
- H_3 : There is a positive relationship between responsiveness and customer loyalty.
- H_4 : There is a positive relationship between assurance and customer loyalty.
- H_5 : There is a positive relationship between empathy and customer loyalty.

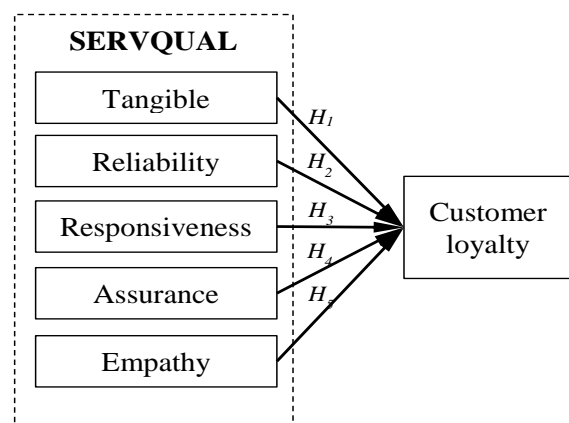


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Method

Research design

A cross-sectional research design was utilized because it allowed the researchers to combine the service quality literature, the pilot study and the actual survey as the main procedure of collecting data for this study. The main advantage of using this procedure may help the researchers to gather accurate, less bias and high quality data (Creswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000). At the initial stage of data collection, a survey questionnaire was drafted based on the service quality research literature. Further, a back translation technique was used to translate the content of questionnaires in Malay and English languages in order to increase the validity and reliability of the research findings (Hulland, 1999; Sekaran, 2000).

Measures

The survey questionnaire consists of two major sections: first, service quality features, i.e., tangible (TANG) had six items, reliability (RELB) had six items, responsiveness (RESP) had six items, assurance (ASSUR) had seven items and empathy (EMPH) had six items that were adjusted from Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) SERVQUAL scale. In a study conducted by Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) showed that the value of reliability of linear combination for all service quality components was 0.92. In this study, the dimensions used to measure tangible were adequate equipment, suitable equipment, suitable location and communication network. The dimensions used to measure reliability were solving, good service, schedule and performance. The dimensions used to measure responsiveness were feedback, priority, take care and urgent action. The dimensions used to measure assurance were comfortable, polite, confident, no complaint and believe. The dimensions used to measure empathy were cooperation, understanding and delivery. Second, loyalty (CUSTLOY) had 12 items that were modified from the service quality related loyalty literature. The dimensions used to measure assurance were pride, choice, and retention. All these items were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “very strongly disagree” (1) to “very strongly agree” (7). Demographic variables were only used as controlling variables because this study focused on customer attitudes.

Sample

A convenient sampling technique was employed to distribute 400 survey questionnaires to soldiers

who involved in the peacekeeping operations at a Middle Eastern country through the Staff Officer Grade 1 (Peacekeeping Mission) in the Malaysia Ministry of Defence. This sampling technique was employed because the researchers had no detail records about the customers who received treatments at the organizations and this situation did not allow the researchers to use a random technique in selecting the participants of this study. Of the total number, 181 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding a response rate of 45.25 percent. The survey questionnaires were answered by participants based on their consents and a voluntarily basis.

Data Analysis

The survey questionnaire data were analyzed using the SmartPLS package because it may deliver latent variable scores, avoid small sample size problems, estimate every complex models with many latent and manifest variables, handle stringent assumptions about the distribution of variables and error terms, and handle both reflective and formative measurement models (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). The data were analyzed using the following steps: first, the model measurement was examined using confirmatory factor analysis. Second, the structural model was assessed by examining the path coefficients using standardized betas (β) and *t* statistics ($t > 1.96$). Third, the value of R^2 is used as an indicator of the overall predictive strength of the model. The value of R^2 is considered as follows; 0.19 (weak), 0.33 (moderate) and 0.67 (substantial) (Henseler *et al.*, 2009; Chin, 2010). As an additional assessment of model fit in PLS analysis, we carried out a test of predictive accuracy for the latent endogenous construct (Q^2 statistic) using blindfolding. According to Chin (2010), the Q^2 statistic is a jackknife version of the R^2 statistic. It represents a measure of how well observed values are reconstructed by the model and its parameter estimates. Model with Q^2 greater than zero are considered to have predictive relevant. The value of Q^2 is considered as follows: 0.02 (small predictive relevance for an endogenous construct), 0.15 (medium predictive relevance for an endogenous construct), and 0.35 (large predictive relevance for an endogenous construct) (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). Further, the value of f^2 is used as a standard to define the effect size of independent variable in the model (i.e., more than 80% (large effect), 20% to 80% (moderate effect), and 0.20% (small) (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Findings

Sample Profile

Table 1 shows that the all respondent characteristics were male (100%). Majority of the respondents ages between 26 to 30 years old (40%), non-officer (89%), higher school certificate holder (62%), years of service between 8–11 years (28%), army (80%) and are mostly first time experience to be assigned with PBB (92%).

Measurement

Table 2 shows the factor loadings and cross loadings for different constructs, and composite reliability for different constructs. The loadings of variables more strongly on their own constructs in the model, greater than 0.70 were considered adequate. Besides that, the correlation between items and factors had higher loadings than other items in the different constructs (Chin, 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Gefen & Straub, 2005).

Table 3 shows the results of convergent and discriminant validity analyses. All constructs had the values of average variance extracted (AVE) larger than 0.5 indicating that they met the acceptable standard of convergent validity (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler

et al., 2009). Besides that, all constructs had the values of AVE square root in diagonal were greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in off diagonal, showing that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity (Henseler *et al.*, 2009).

Analysis of the constructs

Table 4 shows the results of variance inflation factor and descriptive statistics. The means for the variables are ranged from 5.26 to 5.72, showing that the levels of TANG, RELB, RESP, ASSUR, EMPH, CUSTSAT and CUSTLOY are high (above 5). The values of variance inflation factor for the relationships: 1) between the independent variable (i.e., TANG, RELB, RESP, ASSUR, and EMPH) and the dependent variable (i.e., CUSTLOY) were less than 5.0, signifying that the data were not affected by serious multicollinearity problem (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Thus, this measurement model met the validity criteria. Further, the composite reliability had values of greater than 0.8, indicating that all the measurement scale used in this study had high internal consistency (Nunnally & Benstein, 1994). In this sense, these results further confirm that the instrument used in this study has met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses.

Table 1.
Profile of Respondents (N =181)

Respondent Characteristics	Sub-Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	100	100
	Female	0	0
Age	Less than 25 years	23	12.7
	26-30 years	73	40.3
	31-35 years	35	19.3
	36-40 years	44	24.3
	More than 41 years	6	3.3
Position	Officer	20	11
	Others	161	89
Qualification	PMR (Lower school certificate)	51	28.2
	SPM (Higher school certificate)	112	61.9
	Diploma	11	6.1
	Bachelor degree	6	3.3
	Others	1	.6
Length of service	Less than 3 years	8	4.4
	4-7 years	42	23.2
	8-11 years	51	28.2
	12-15 years	23	12.7
	More than 15 years	57	31.5
Service	Malaysian Army	145	80.1
	Royal Malaysian Navy	22	12.2
	Royal Malaysian Air Force	14	7.7
PBB assignments	First Time	166	91.7
	Second Time	10	5.5
	More than 3 times	5	2.9

Table 2.
Factor Loadings and Cross Loadings

Construct	No. of Item	Cross-Factor Loadings					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
TANG	3	0.979 to 0.858					
RELB	5	0.747 to 0.871					
RESP	3	0.844 to 0.856					
ASSUR	7	0.757 to 0.828					
EMPH	6	0.813 to 0.868					
CUSTLOY	8	0.813 to 0.846					

Table 3.
Convergent and Discriminant Analyses

Construct	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
TANG	0.692	0.832					
RELB	0.652	0.679	0.807				
RESP	0.721	0.689	0.730	0.849			
ASSUR	0.621	0.567	0.596	0.747	0.788		
EMPH	0.699	0.603	0.841	0.779	0.651	0.836	
CUSTLOY	0.674	0.603	0.524	0.649	0.718	0.532	0.821

Table 4.
Collinearity Diagnostics, Reliability Analyses, and Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor	Composite Reliability
TANG	5.4843	0.83402	2.226	0.870
RELB	5.5184	0.80237	4.077	0.918
RESP	5.5617	0.80010	3.913	0.886
ASSUR	5.4665	0.68406	2.343	0.920
EMPH	5.4630	0.83919	4.401	0.942
CUSTLOY	5.6022	0.61710		0.943

Result and Discussion

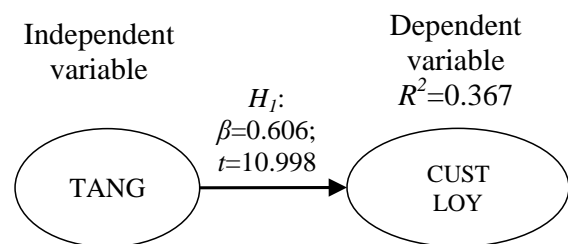
Result of Hypotheses Testing

Outcomes of Testing H₁

Figure 2 shows that the inclusion of TANG had contributed 37 percent in the variance of CUSTLOY. In terms of explanatory power of this model, it provides a moderate support for the overall model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, TANG was significantly correlated with CUSTLOY ($\beta = 0.606$; $t = 10.998$), therefore H_1 was supported. In sum, this result demonstrates that TANG is an important determinant of CUSTLOY.

Further, predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) were assessed using Blindfolding and PLS Algorithm procedures, respectively. The value of Q^2 for the CUSTLOY was 0.239, showing that it was greater than zero (0). This result has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In terms of predictive strength, it indicates that service quality has a medium predictive

relevance for CUSTLOY. While, the value of f^2 for TANG was 0.580, signifying that the effect size of TANG was large in the hypothesized model (Hair *et al.*, 2014).



Note: Significant at >1.96

Figure 2. The result of testing hypothesis H_1

Outcomes of Testing H₂

Figure 3 shows that the inclusion of RELB had contributed 53 percent in the variance of CUSTLOY. In terms of explanatory power of this model, it provides a moderate support for the overall model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, RELB was significantly

correlated with CUSTLOY ($\beta =0.530$; $t=7.581$), therefore H_2 was supported. In sum, this result demonstrates that RELB is an important determinant of CUSTLOY.

Further, predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) were assessed using Blindfolding procedure and PLS Algorithm, respectively. The value of Q^2 for the CUSTLOY was 0.239, showing that it was greater than zero (0). This result has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In terms of predictive strength, it indicates that service quality has a medium predictive relevance for CUSTLOY. While, the value of f^2 for RELB was 0.391, signifying that the effect size of RELB was large in the hypothesized model (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

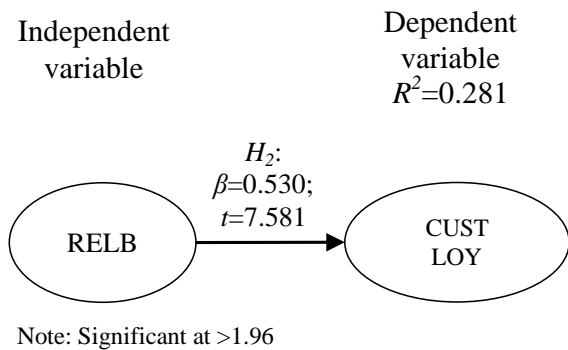
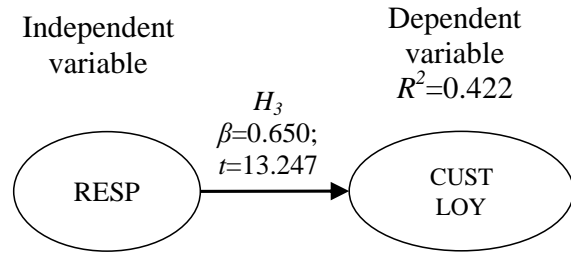


Figure 3. The result of testing hypothesis H_2

Outcomes of Testing H_3

Figure 4 shows that the inclusion of RESP had contributed 0.422 percent in the variance of CUSTLOY. In terms of explanatory power of this model, it provides a large support for the overall model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, RESP was significantly correlated with CUSTLOY ($\beta =0.65$; $t=13.247$), therefore H_3 was supported. In sum, this result demonstrates that RESP is an important determinant of CUSTLOY.

Further, predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) were assessed using Blindfolding and PLS Algorithm procedures, respectively. The value of Q^2 for the CUSTLOY was 0.274, showing that it was greater than zero (0). This result has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In terms of predictive strength, it indicates that service quality has a medium predictive relevance for CUSTLOY. While, the value of f^2 for RESP was 0.730, signifying that the effect size of RESP was 0.730 in the hypothesized model (Hair *et al.*, 2014).



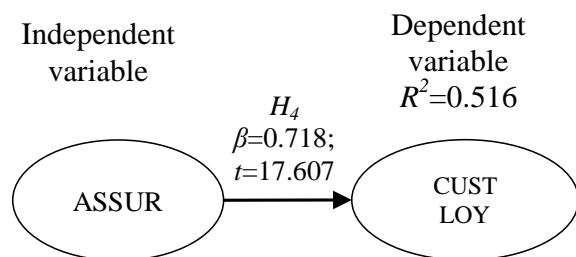
Note: Significant at >1.96

Figure 4. The result of testing hypothesis H_3

Outcomes of Testing H_4

Figure 5 shows that the inclusion of ASSUR had contributed 52 percent in the variance of CUSTLOY. In terms of explanatory power of this model, it provides a moderate support for the overall model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, ASSUR was significantly correlated with CUSTLOY ($\beta=0.718$; $t=17.607$), therefore H_4 was supported. In sum, this result demonstrates that ASSUR is an important determinant of CUSTLOY.

Further, predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) were assessed using Blindfolding and PLS Algorithm procedures, respectively. The value of Q^2 for the CUSTLOY was 0.338, showing that it was greater than zero (0). This result has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In terms of predictive strength, it indicates that service quality has a medium predictive relevance for CUSTLOY. While, the value of f^2 for ASSUR was 1.066, signifying that the effect size of ASSUR was large in the hypothesized model (Hair *et al.*, 2014).



Note: Significant at >1.96

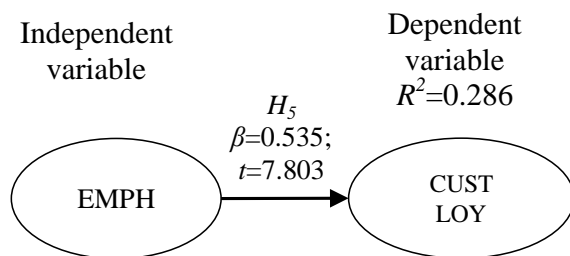
Figure 5. The result of testing hypothesis H_4

Outcomes of Testing H_5

Figure 6 shows that the inclusion of EMPH had contributed 29 percent in the variance of CUSTLOY. In terms of explanatory power of this model, it provides a moderate support for the overall model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Further, EMP was significantly correlated with CUSTLOY ($\beta =0.535$; $t=7.803$),

therefore H_5 was supported. In sum, this result demonstrates that EMPH is an important determinant of CUSTLOY.

Further, predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) were assessed using Blindfolding and PLS Algorithm procedures, respectively. The value of Q^2 for the CUSTLOY was 0.187, showing that it was greater than zero (0). This result has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In terms of predictive strength, it indicates that service quality has a medium predictive relevance for CUSTLOY. While, the value of f^2 for EMPH was 0.400, signifying that the effect size of EMPH was large in the hypothesized model (Hair *et al.*, 2014).



Note: Significant at >1.96

Figure 6. The result of testing hypothesis H_5

Discussion

The findings of this study show that service quality does act as an important determinant of customer loyalty. In practice, management has planned and monitored the implementation of service quality based on the broad policies and procedures established by their stakeholders. The majority respondents view that the levels of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and customer loyalty are high. This situation explains that the ability of employees to appropriately implement the quality components in executing job may strongly enhance customer loyalty.

This study provides three major implications: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution. With respect to theoretical contribution, this study confirms that the tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy as proposed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985; 1988; 1990) SERVQUAL model have been important determinants of customer loyalty. The finding also has supported previous finding in which service quality has the capability to enhance customer loyalty (Izogo & Ogba, 2015; Kondasani & Panda, 2015). This study has extended the literature in service qua-

lity and customer loyalty in the service industry. In more specific, this study confirms the generalizability of the relationship of the SERVQUAL with customer loyalty is applicable and extended to a new settings of peacekeeping mission in the conflict warzone.

In regard with the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaire used in this study has met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. This condition may lead to the production of accurate and reliable findings.

In terms of practical contribution, the findings of this study can be used as guidelines by management to improve the quality of managing peacekeeping operations in conflicting countries. Since the implementation of service quality in organization can lead to higher customer loyalty, the peacekeeping mission management can enhance quality service through training so that they could better understand the needs and expectations of soldiers. In addition, rewarding the soldiers could enhance customer loyalty which ultimately translated into motivation to maintain relationship with the organization. Other than direct reward, which include monetary reward, indirect reward such as recognition is also critical to increase customer loyalty.

In order to support this objective, the battalion commander and hospital management should give more attention on the following aspects. First, quality service training program needs to be provided to all staff regardless of their ranks in order to increase their soft skills and confident in handling different customer attitudes and behaviour. Second, better recognitions need to be provided to staff that show high obligation to maintain quality in delivering services to customers. Third, recruitment policy needs to be adjusted in order to select knowledgeable and experienced staff to fulfil higher ranks positions. Their capabilities may be used to mentor and coach lower ranks officers and supervisors in practicing service quality based on international quality management standards. Fourth, communication openness needs to be used to disseminate policies and procedures via printed materials, online and face to face interaction with customers. This communication may decrease misconceptions and increase good rapports between customers and medical staff. If these suggestions are greatly considered this may motivate customers to support the organizational service quality goals.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Implications

This study tested a theoretical framework developed based on the service quality research literature. The instrument used in this study has met the accep-

table standards of the validity and reliability analyses. The outcomes of SmartPLS path model analysis showed that service quality (i.e., tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) was significantly correlated with customer loyalty, therefore H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , H_4 and H_5 were supported. This result demonstrates that the ability of organization to appropriately implement tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy in planning and managing peacekeeping missions had enhanced customer loyalty. This result also has supported and broadened studies mostly published in overseas. Therefore, current research and practice within workplace quality models need to integrate tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy as key success factor of the service quality domain. This finding further suggests that the competency of organization to appropriately implement the service quality components in executing daily job may strongly induce subsequent positive customer outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction, behavioural intention and perceived value). Thus, these positive effects may lead to maintained and achieved the organizational strategic security and defence missions.

This study has several methodological and conceptual limitations. First, a cross-sectional research design used in this study may not capture causal connections between the variables of interest. Second, the outcomes of SmartPLS path model analysis have not measured the relationship between specific indicators for the independent variable and dependent variable. Finally, the sample for this study was only taken from soldiers who involved in a specific peacekeeping missions at one country. Conversely, these limitations may decrease the generalization of the results to other organizational settings.

In order to strengthen this study, future research should consider the following suggestions: first, several organizational and personal characteristics should be further explored, where this may show meaningful perspectives in understanding how individual similarities and differences influence the implementation of service quality by organizations. Second, other research designs (e.g., longitudinal studies) should be utilized to collect data and describe the patterns of change and the direction and magnitude of causal relationships amongst variables of interest. Third, to fully understand the effect of service quality on customer attitudes and behaviour, a more diverse organizations need to be involved. Fourth, other specific theoretical constructs of service quality such as technical and environmental qualities need to be considered because they have widely been acknowledged

as an important link between service quality and many aspects of customer outcomes (Gracia, Cifre, & Grau, 2010; Gronroos, 2007; Ladhari, 2009; Isik *et al.*, 2011). Fifth, response bias and common-method variance is a common issue in survey method. In order to decrease this weakness, the use of a larger sample size may characterize the studied population. Finally, other specific elements of customer outcomes such as perceived value, satisfaction, behavioural intentions need to be given attention because their roles are often discussed in many service quality research literatures (Azman *et al.*, 2014; Kitapci *et al.*, 2014). Hence, the importance of these issues needs to be further discovered in future study.

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