# THE IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THAILAND

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## ABSTRACT

*Service quality is one of key success factors that lead an organization to success in this era of privatization. To be a service leader is very important in all industries, including education. It is very critical that private universities offer quality services to students. The competition among educational institutions in both the state and private sector in Thailand is intense. Therefore, improving the service quality in private universities is one of the strategies to increase their sustainable competitive advantage. In this paper, a modified Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) model was constructed on the basis of comparing perceived performance and the importance of each service attribute of the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model.*

## INTRODUCTION

The popular "SERVQUAL" model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1990) has been used effectively to measure service quality in various businesses and countries. The SERVQUAL model was modified and adopted in studies on a wide range of service industries, such as hotels (Saleh and Ryan, 1992), car servicing (Bouman and Van Der Wiele, 1992), banking (Kwon and Lee, 1994; Wong and Perry, 1991), accounting firms (Freeman and Dart, 1993), and several other professions. SERVQUAL model has also been used to measure the service quality in ocean freight services in Singapore (Durvasula, Lysonski, and Mehta, 1999), high street retail banks (Newman 2001) and patient's satisfaction with NHS hospital in UK (Youssef, 1996). It is also interesting to note the application of SERVQUAL in educational service, for example, business schools (Rogotti and Pitt, 1992) and higher education (Ford et al., 1993 and McElwee and Redman, 1993).

One modification on the previous study on service quality is the adoption of the "Importance-Performance Analysis". This technique was introduced into the field of marketing in the late 1970s. It identifies strengths and weaknesses of a market offering such as brands, product, and services (Keyt, Yavas, and Riecken, 1994).

The measurement of the Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) and the SERVQUAL model is quite similar. The IPA technique identifies strengths and weaknesses by comparing the two criteria that consumers use in making a choice. One criterion is the relative importance of attributes. The other is consumers' evaluation of the offering in terms of those attributes. The SERVQUAL model, on the other hand, identifies the customer satisfaction of service attributes by comparing customer's expectation and customer's perception on five dimensions.

The five dimensions of SERVQUAL model include: "tangibles" (the hardware infrastructure), "reliability" (the consistency of service as promised), "responsiveness" (the ability to update, adjust or customize the contents & delivery of the service), "assurance" (the capability of the service provider) and "empathy" (a caring and customer-centered soft environment).

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

### The Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) technique

The Importance–Performance Analysis (IPA) is a technique for prioritizing attributes based on measurements of performance and importance to understand customer satisfaction. This technique