

## ABSTRACT

Museums nowadays are facing competition with alternative providers of leisure and educational activities such as the entertainment and cultural districts in central cities, cyberspace, restaurants, sports arenas and shopping malls which also present collections and exhibitions. More and more museum leaders are concerned about this competition which has become a challenge for museums to seek ways to reach a broader public and forge community relationships (Kotler, P., 2000).

In this study, SERVQUAL is utilized to investigate visitor's satisfaction in service quality dimensions in the Museum of Siam, Bangkok, Thailand. The objectives are to examine: whether or not there is a difference between visitor's expectation and perception towards the five dimensions of service quality as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy; to study the relationship between visitor's expectation and perception based on demographic factors as gender, age, and profession and thus to evaluate and restructure the service attributes in the Museum of Siam; to examine whether or not there is a difference between visitor's expectation and perception regarding the years 2008 and 2009; after the careful analysis of all the above factors, the study can provide strategic suggestions for improvement of services at the Museum of Siam, Bangkok.

The findings of this study are based on the analysis of 381 Thai respondents who first visited the Museum of Siam, Thailand during the years 2008 – 2009. 38 closed SERVQUAL questions are used to measure visitor's expectation and perception towards five service quality dimensions in part I, and visitor's gender, age, profession are collected in part II. Paired Sample T-test, Independent Sample Test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are used for the hypothesis testing. Major findings indicate that there are no relationships between visitor's expectation and perception towards reliability; but there are relationships between visitor's expectation and perception towards tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. There are no relationships between visitor's expectation and perception based on gender; there are relationships

between visitor's expectation and perception based on age and profession. There are no differences between visitor's expectation and perception regarding the years 2008 and 2009 as the results show that visitors are not satisfied with "reliability" in the years 2008 and 2009, but satisfied with tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

For further research, the researcher recommends the managers of the Museum of Siam to utilize the research results correctly. In this research, the SERVQUAL scale includes all 37 items, which are the result of extensive qualitative research and empirical validation by the researcher; however, the scale might have missed some items. Thus, for further research, it is recommended to develop a scale of measuring service quality with the scale development guidelines and procedures. In addition, besides the SERVQUAL model, other measurement instruments can also be utilized.

