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Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Two Telecommunication Service Providers in Qatar

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Abstract

In the increasingly competitive telecommunications sector, service quality has emerged as a critical driver of customer satisfaction and long-term success. This study investigates the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in Qatar's telecommunications industry, focusing on the two leading providers: Ooredoo and Vodafone. Drawing on the SERVQUAL model, the research examines five key service quality dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—and evaluates their impact on customer satisfaction through a comparative analysis. Data were collected via structured questionnaires from 92 customers. The findings reveal a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between all service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction, with service quality accounting for 76% of the variance in satisfaction levels. While both companies received generally favorable ratings, Ooredoo customers reported higher satisfaction, particularly in intangible service aspects. The study contributes to the limited body of empirical research in the Gulf region and offers actionable insights for telecom operators aiming to improve service delivery, enhance customer loyalty, and align with Qatar's national digital transformation goals.

Keywords

Service Quality; Customer Satisfaction; SERVQUAL; Telecommunications; Ooredoo; Vodafone; Qatar.

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Background

In today's competitive business environment, organizations across all sectors strive to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, recognizing its pivotal role in sustaining growth, ensuring customer retention, and gaining competitive advantage (Gera, 2011; Kotler et al., 2021). Customer satisfaction is particularly critical in the telecommunications industry, where service providers face intense competition, rapid technological advancement, and increasingly demanding consumers. In such a dynamic environment, merely offering core telecommunication services is no longer sufficient. Companies must consistently deliver high-quality service experiences that meet or exceed customer expectations to remain competitive (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Alshurideh et al., 2021).

The link between service quality and customer satisfaction has been a central theme in marketing and service management literature for decades. Numerous studies have confirmed that service quality is one of the most significant determinants of customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 1996; Hutchinson et al., 2009; Amin et al., 2023). Service quality refers to the overall assessment of a service by customers, based on their expectations and perceptions of actual service delivery. It encompasses dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, as outlined in the widely adopted SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

However, while SERVQUAL has been extensively applied across industries, its adaptability to highly digitalized service contexts such as telecommunications in the Gulf region remains underexplored. Recent advances in digital service platforms, 5G infrastructure, and AI-driven customer support have redefined what constitutes "service quality" in telecom settings (Almarri & Saif, 2024; Chowdhury & Rahman, 2024).

Despite the vast body of literature on service quality and customer satisfaction, most empirical studies have focused on developed economies, with limited attention paid to developing countries, particularly in the Gulf region (Agyapong, 2011; Hammoud et al., 2018). In Qatar, where the telecommunications sector is dominated by two main service providers—Ooredoo and Vodafone Qatar—there is a growing need to understand how these companies perform in terms of service quality and how this influences customer satisfaction.

This study contributes to the SERVQUAL literature by contextualizing the model within a digitally transformed market characterized by bilingual consumers, high smartphone penetration, and government-led digital transformation initiatives under Qatar National Vision 2030. Unlike prior studies focusing on single firms, this research offers a comparative analysis of two providers, highlighting contextual adaptations and empirical insights specific to the Qatari telecommunications market.

Moreover, prior research has often concentrated on single service providers, thereby neglecting comparative analyses that could offer deeper insights into customer perceptions across competing firms. Comparative studies are essential for identifying industry benchmarks, service delivery gaps, and areas for improvement (Al-Debei et al., 2015; Alnaser et al., 2022). Therefore, this research seeks to address these gaps by examining the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the context of two leading telecommunication service providers in Qatar. It aims to provide empirical evidence on how each company is perceived by its customers and what implications this has for service improvement and competitive strategy.

Research Question and Objectives

This research investigates the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within Qatar's telecommunications sector, focusing specifically on the two leading service providers: Ooredoo and Vodafone. In today's competitive business environment, customer satisfaction has become a crucial determinant of organizational success. This study aims to explore how various dimensions of service quality, such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, influence customer satisfaction in the context of these two providers. The central research question guiding this study is: *What is the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in the two major telecommunication service providers in Qatar: Ooredoo and Vodafone?*

To answer this question, the study outlines five key objectives. First, it aims to review the relevant academic literature, theoretical models, and empirical research addressing the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, particularly in the telecommunications sector. Second, it seeks to explore and compare the levels of customer satisfaction among users of Ooredoo and Vodafone in Qatar. Third, the study aims to evaluate and contrast the perceived quality of service provided by each company across the established dimensions. Fourth, it intends to analyze the nature and strength of the relationship between specific service quality attributes and overall customer

satisfaction for each provider. Finally, the study seeks to generate practical, evidence-based recommendations to help improve service quality and customer satisfaction outcomes for both Ooredoo and Vodafone.

This study is driven by both practical relevance and alignment with Qatar's strategic goals. In recent years, telecommunication services have become an integral part of daily life for individuals and a critical operational tool for businesses. As of January 2024, Qatar reported approximately 4.75 million active mobile connections, equivalent to 174.2% of the total population, alongside an internet penetration rate of 99.0% with 2.70 million internet users. These figures reflect the significant dependence on telecommunications services for communication, commerce, education, and entertainment (Data Reportal, 2024). In such a context, understanding how customers perceive service quality—and how that perception affects satisfaction—becomes essential for service providers aiming to meet or exceed customer expectations.

In addition to its practical importance, this research aligns with national objectives outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030 and the country's Digital Agenda 2030. The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology recently launched the Digital Inclusion Index Report 2024, emphasizing the need for accessible, high-quality digital infrastructure to support a knowledge-based economy. Enhancing telecom service quality is critical for enabling widespread digital participation, supporting innovation, and promoting economic diversification (MCIT, 2025). This underscores the strategic value of improving customer satisfaction in telecommunications, not only as a business priority but also as a national imperative.

From an industry standpoint, customer satisfaction is closely linked to customer loyalty, positive brand reputation, and sustainable competitive advantage. With Qatar's telecommunications market dominated by Ooredoo and Vodafone, the competition to attract and retain customers is intense. Telecom operators are increasingly investing in service improvements and customer experience initiatives, yet there remains limited academic research evaluating how these efforts translate into customer satisfaction—particularly from a comparative perspective. Most previous studies in this field have been conducted in developed countries, with few empirical investigations addressing the Qatari context. This study addresses that gap by providing insights into customer experiences with both Ooredoo and Vodafone and by identifying service quality dimensions that most significantly influence satisfaction. The findings will offer valuable implications for telecom companies, regulators, and policymakers seeking to enhance service delivery and customer outcomes in Qatar.

Literature Review

Service Quality

The telecommunications sector has undergone significant transformation, becoming a cornerstone of modern economies and societies. As the industry evolves, the emphasis on delivering high-quality services to ensure customer satisfaction has intensified. Service quality, inherently intangible in telecommunications, plays a pivotal role in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty.

The SERVQUAL model, introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, remains a foundational framework for assessing service quality. It delineates five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions serve as benchmarks for evaluating customer expectations against actual service performance. Recent studies have reaffirmed the model's applicability across diverse contexts.

However, emerging literature increasingly integrates digital service quality constructs—such as system efficiency, data security, network stability, and mobile app usability—into modified versions of SERVQUAL to reflect the realities of modern telecom services (Amin, 2023; Kim et al., 2023; Akram et al., 2024).

In Nigeria, Sufian et al. (2023) examined the impact of tangibility and assurance on customer satisfaction among telecommunication users in Abuja. Their findings indicated that while tangibility positively influenced satisfaction, assurance had a negative effect, suggesting the need for improved customer service training. Similarly, in Tanzania, Okinda (2024) investigated the influence of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction with Vodacom. The study revealed that responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, and empathy significantly affected customer satisfaction, underscoring the multifaceted nature of service quality.

Newer studies in technologically advanced markets emphasize the integration of 5G quality perception and digital experience as determinants of satisfaction. For instance, Almarri and Saif (2024) found that network reliability and 5G

coverage were strong predictors of satisfaction in the UAE, while digital interface usability also emerged as critical in user retention.

Focusing on the GCC region, [Alsaqer et al. \(2024\)](#) assessed the role of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices in enhancing customer satisfaction within telecommunications firms. Their research emphasized that employee engagement and process management significantly contributed to improved customer satisfaction, advocating for the integration of TQM strategies.

Nevertheless, a key theoretical gap persists: few studies have examined how SERVQUAL dimensions interact with digital service elements in Middle Eastern telecom markets, particularly in Qatar. This study seeks to fill that gap by evaluating whether traditional SERVQUAL measures remain valid or require adaptation in digitally driven service ecosystems.

In Jordan, Salem and Kiss (2023) applied the SERVQUAL model to evaluate internet service providers. Their study identified perceptual gaps between customer expectations and actual experiences, particularly in responsiveness and assurance, suggesting areas for service enhancement.

These studies collectively underscore the critical role of service quality dimensions in shaping customer satisfaction within the telecommunications industry. They also highlight the necessity for continuous assessment and improvement of service delivery mechanisms to meet evolving customer expectations.

In the Qatari context, this research not only applies the SERVQUAL model but also explores its contextual adaptation to a market characterized by advanced digital infrastructure and bilingual service delivery. By doing so, it aims to extend the theoretical understanding of service quality measurement in emerging digital economies.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction continues to be a critical success factor for organizations, especially in service-intensive sectors such as telecommunications. With rising competition, technological convergence, and rapidly evolving customer expectations, telecom service providers are compelled to prioritize customer satisfaction as a strategic objective ([Hossain et al., 2023](#)). Numerous studies confirm that customer satisfaction plays a vital role in driving customer loyalty, reducing churn, and enhancing organizational profitability ([Alsaqer, Katar, & Abdelhadi, 2024](#)).

Defining customer satisfaction, however, remains a complex endeavor. Traditional views regard it as the outcome of a specific service transaction—an immediate emotional or cognitive response to a service experience ([Oliver, 1997](#)). In contrast, more recent literature adopts a cumulative perspective, viewing satisfaction as the result of a series of interactions and experiences over time ([Kim et al., 2023](#)). This modern approach is particularly relevant in the telecom industry, where customer relationships are long-term and interactions are continuous.

A major component of customer satisfaction is the alignment between customer expectations and actual service performance. [Bitner, Gremler, and Zeithaml \(2021\)](#) argue that satisfaction arises when the perceived service quality meets or exceeds expectations. In their view, service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance are core predictors of satisfaction. Recent studies have reinforced these dimensions while also incorporating digital service quality and customer support experience as emerging criteria in the digital age ([Amin, 2023](#)).

Recent research further emphasizes the growing importance of digital touchpoints in shaping satisfaction, including mobile app performance, chatbot responsiveness, omnichannel consistency, and data security ([Almarri & Saif, 2024](#); [Chowdhury & Rahman, 2024](#)). These factors extend traditional models of satisfaction beyond physical and human interactions toward hybrid digital-human service experiences.

In the Gulf region, [Almarri and Saif \(2024\)](#) found that network quality, pricing transparency, and mobile application usability were among the most significant drivers of satisfaction in the UAE's telecom market. Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, [Alzahrani \(2024\)](#) reported that fast issue resolution and digital service customization significantly influenced satisfaction levels among young customers.

In the Qatari context, however, there remains a paucity of empirical evidence exploring how digital service experiences—such as self-care mobile platforms, bilingual digital interfaces, and 5G service reliability—affect customer satisfaction. This lack of research creates a clear theoretical gap that this study aims to address.

Furthermore, digital transformation and innovation are reshaping the customer satisfaction landscape. Mobile self-service apps, AI-powered chatbots, and personalized digital experiences are now essential components of telecom customer service (Chowdhury & Rahman, 2024). Companies investing in these tools tend to report higher satisfaction and loyalty metrics, especially among tech-savvy younger users.

This suggests that traditional satisfaction frameworks may need modification to include digital performance metrics, especially in technologically advanced markets like Qatar, where telecom services are deeply integrated into national digital transformation efforts (Qatar Digital Government, 2023).

While the foundational determinants such as price fairness, call quality, and coverage remain relevant, newer factors such as digital experience quality, data privacy, and sustainability practices are gaining prominence (Akram et al., 2024). Telecom providers are therefore encouraged to integrate advanced analytics, customer journey mapping, and real-time feedback loops to remain responsive and agile in meeting customer needs.

Hence, customer satisfaction should be viewed as a multidimensional construct encompassing not only functional quality but also emotional and digital experience factors. This multidimensional approach provides the theoretical foundation for the current study's empirical framework.

The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

Recent literature consistently affirms that service quality is a fundamental determinant of customer satisfaction, particularly in service-intensive industries like telecommunications. As customer expectations evolve in the digital age, ensuring high service quality has become crucial for telecom operators seeking to retain customers and sustain competitive advantage (Alsaqer, Katar, & Abdelhadi, 2024; Amin, 2023). Empirical research has long acknowledged this link, with earlier foundational studies such as Hutchinson et al. (2009) and Sureshchandar et al. (2002) emphasizing that perceived service quality influences how customers evaluate their overall satisfaction with service providers.

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), remains widely used to assess service quality through five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Contemporary studies have extended this model to various national contexts and service sectors. For example, Kim et al. (2023) demonstrated that in South Korea's mobile services, perceived reliability and responsiveness were the most critical drivers of customer satisfaction. This suggests that some service quality dimensions may exert more influence than others, depending on the market context.

However, there is growing evidence that digital service quality components—such as app interface quality, data privacy, and service innovation—are increasingly influencing satisfaction alongside traditional SERVQUAL dimensions (Chowdhury & Rahman, 2024; Almarri & Saif, 2024). This theoretical extension is central to the present study's contribution.

It is hypothesized that there is a significant positive relationship between overall service quality and customer satisfaction in the Qatari telecommunications sector (H1).

Earlier studies, such as those by Ojo (2010) in Nigeria and Agyapong (2011) in Ghana, confirmed that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction. However, many did not explicitly identify which dimensions had the most substantial impact. In contrast, Arslan (2015) in Pakistan found that only empathy and reliability were significantly associated with customer satisfaction, implying that not all service quality factors are equally weighted in customer perceptions. Likewise, Downe et al. (2011) in Malaysia found that all five dimensions significantly contributed to satisfaction, reinforcing the holistic value of service quality.

Given these findings, the current research suggests:

Each of the service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) is expected to have a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction (H2).

Furthermore, this study extends SERVQUAL by examining whether emerging digital service features—such as 5G reliability, mobile app responsiveness, and self-service convenience—moderate the relationship between perceived service quality and satisfaction in the Qatari market.

The inconsistency in prior results—where some dimensions are influential in certain countries but not in others—highlights the importance of understanding local consumer expectations. In Greece, for example, Trivellas et al. (2010)

found that customers prioritized pricing structure and billing systems over traditional service dimensions. Similarly, in Turkey, [Quach et al. \(2015\)](#) demonstrated that service quality influenced not only satisfaction but also customer trust and loyalty, reinforcing the idea that service quality is part of a broader perception of value.

In more recent studies, service quality has been tied to digital transformation. [Almarri and Saif \(2024\)](#) emphasized network reliability and mobile app usability as primary drivers of customer satisfaction in the UAE telecom market, while [Chowdhury and Rahman \(2024\)](#) stressed the role of chatbot effectiveness and digital responsiveness in building satisfaction among telecom users. These digital elements increasingly align with traditional SERVQUAL dimensions, particularly responsiveness and assurance.

The theoretical gap, therefore, lies in understanding whether these integrated service quality constructs operate similarly across competing firms in a digitalized market like Qatar. Addressing this gap provides both theoretical advancement and practical insights for the adaptation of SERVQUAL in emerging digital economies.

It is also hypothesized that among the service quality dimensions, reliability and empathy will have the strongest influence on customer satisfaction (H3).

This expectation stems from the observation that customers value dependability and personalized attention more than purely physical attributes ([Hossain et al., 2023](#)).

Despite the consensus on the general link between service quality and satisfaction, few studies have examined this relationship within the Qatari telecommunications sector, and even fewer have compared multiple service providers within the same market. Most prior research focuses on single firms or national telecom monopolies.

Accordingly, this study contributes theoretically by offering one of the first empirical comparative analyses of service quality and satisfaction across Qatar's two major telecom providers, thereby testing the cross-firm consistency of SERVQUAL and its digital extensions.

Based on this context, the study further posits:

The relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction will vary significantly between different telecommunications service providers in Qatar (H4).

This hypothesis recognizes that service delivery models, customer service cultures, and digital interfaces may differ from one company to another, resulting in diverse customer experiences even within the same industry and country.

Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that social phenomena can be objectively observed and measured through empirical, scientific methods. Guided by this philosophical stance, the research followed a quantitative, deductive approach aimed at testing established theories linking service quality to customer satisfaction within Qatar's telecommunications sector.

A conceptual model derived from the literature was tested using a structured questionnaire survey. Consistent with the deductive approach, the study began with theoretical foundations, developed hypotheses, and collected data to empirically test these hypotheses in a real-world context.

- Research Design and Strategy

A survey strategy was employed because it allows for systematic data collection from a relatively large number of respondents and supports statistical analysis of relationships between variables ([Saunders et al., 2019](#)). The questionnaire contained closed-ended items designed to measure five dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—based on the SERVQUAL model ([Parasuraman et al., 1988](#)). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*.

The study adopted a cross-sectional design, as data were collected at a single point in time to capture customer perceptions and attitudes without tracking changes over time.

- Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of customers of Qatar's two main telecommunication service providers: Ooredoo and Vodafone Qatar. A total of 100 valid responses were collected—50 from each company. Although the study initially aimed to employ a simple random sampling technique, in practice a convenience sampling method was applied due to logistical constraints and the manual (face-to-face) distribution of questionnaires in public areas such as shopping centers and service outlets. This method allowed efficient data collection within the study's limited timeframe while ensuring diversity in respondents' demographics.

- Instrument Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was developed based on validated instruments from prior research on service quality and customer satisfaction (e.g., [Parasuraman et al., 1988](#); [Zeithaml et al., 1996](#); [Amin, 2023](#)). To ensure content validity, the survey was reviewed by two academic experts and two telecommunications professionals.

A pilot test involving 10 respondents was conducted to assess clarity and comprehension. Minor modifications were made to improve wording and layout. Internal consistency was then evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with all dimensions exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70, confirming acceptable reliability ([Hair et al., 2020](#)). Additionally, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed to confirm the underlying structure of the five SERVQUAL dimensions and eliminate items with low loadings (<0.50).

- Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through hand-to-hand distribution of questionnaires in selected locations across Doha. Respondents were briefed on the study's purpose before completing the survey. The process ensured efficient and timely data gathering within the available research period.

Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were used to summarize respondent characteristics and service quality perceptions. Inferential statistical tests, including Pearson correlations, independent-sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA, were applied to test the study's hypotheses and examine relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Where applicable, statistical assumptions such as normality and homogeneity of variance were checked prior to conducting inferential tests to ensure robustness of results.

- Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity was maintained throughout the research process. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant academic institution before data collection. Participants were provided with an informed consent statement detailing the study's objectives, confidentiality of responses, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. No personal identifiers were collected, and all data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

- Summary

The chosen methodology aligns with the study's objective of empirically examining the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within Qatar's telecommunications sector. The positivist, quantitative, and cross-sectional design allows for statistical generalization and objective interpretation, contributing to empirical understanding in service quality research.

Data Analysis

Customer Profile

The survey respondents represent a diverse customer base of the two major telecom providers in Qatar—Ooredoo and Vodafone. A majority of participants were aged between 26 and 40 years, reflecting the dominant demographic of working professionals who are likely to rely heavily on mobile and internet services. Male respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion than females, with both genders actively engaged as customers of the two companies. The education levels of respondents were predominantly university graduates, and many held postgraduate qualifications, indicating a well-informed customer base with high expectations of service quality. Regarding income, a significant

portion of the respondents reported monthly earnings between QAR 10,000 and QAR 20,000, placing them in the middle to upper-income category. This income bracket suggests that customers are likely to value service reliability, technical support, and responsiveness. Nationality-wise, the sample included a balanced mix of Qatari nationals and expatriates, aligning with the country's demographic composition. The majority of customers reported having used the same telecom provider for more than three years, indicating stable customer relationships and opportunities for long-term service improvement strategies.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56%
	Female	44%
Age	18–25	22%
	26–40	47%
	41–60	26%
	60+	5%
Education	Secondary	14%
	Undergraduate	51%
	Postgraduate	35%
Monthly Income	Below QAR 10,000	18%
	QAR 10,000–20,000	46%
	Above QAR 20,000	36%
Nationality	Qatari	49%
	Non-Qatari	51%
Provider Tenure	Less than 1 year	7%
	1–3 years	21%
	More than 3 years	72%

Analysis of Service Quality Dimensions

The assessment of service quality was conducted using the SERVQUAL model, covering five key dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Each dimension was evaluated based on customer perceptions of Ooredoo and Vodafone's service offerings, and their average scores provide insight into performance gaps and strengths.

Overall, Assurance emerged as the highest-rated dimension, with a combined average score of 4.06, indicating strong customer confidence in the professionalism and courtesy of staff from both providers. This reflects positively on how well-trained and competent the service teams are perceived to be. Notably, Vodafone slightly outperformed Ooredoo in this category, which suggests a more consistent delivery of courteous and knowledgeable service experiences.

Reliability, the second highest-rated dimension with an overall mean of 3.99, was where Ooredoo particularly excelled, achieving the top score of 4.22. This suggests that customers of Ooredoo view the company as more dependable and consistent in its service delivery. Vodafone, by contrast, scored a lower 3.75, pointing to some inconsistencies in meeting customer expectations and fulfilling promised services.

In the Responsiveness dimension, both providers scored similarly—Ooredoo (4.06) and Vodafone (3.90)—resulting in an overall mean of 3.98. These results indicate that while response times and willingness to assist are fairly satisfactory, there is still room for improvement, particularly in handling complaints and providing prompt customer service.

The Empathy dimension revealed moderate satisfaction levels with an overall average of 3.85. Ooredoo again led in this area, scoring 3.96 compared to Vodafone's 3.73. These figures suggest that Ooredoo is perceived as slightly better

at providing individualized attention and understanding customer needs, though both providers could enhance the personalization of their services.

Interestingly, the lowest-rated dimension across the board was Tangibles, with a combined mean of 3.83. This includes aspects like the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, and the overall modernity of service tools. Vodafone scored higher in this dimension (3.91) than Ooredoo (3.76), indicating that Vodafone's infrastructure and physical service environment are perceived as more up-to-date or appealing to customers.

Table2: Comparative Summary of Service Quality Dimensions

Dimension	Ooredoo Mean	Vodafone Mean		Overall Mean	Ooredoo Rank	Vodafone Rank	Overall Rank
Reliability	4.22	3.75		3.99	1	4	2
Assurance	4.18	3.93		4.06	2	1	1
Responsiveness	4.06	3.90		3.98	3	3	3
Empathy	3.96	3.73		3.85	4	5	4
Tangibles	3.76	3.91		3.83	5	2	5

These findings highlight different strengths between the two providers: Ooredoo is perceived as more reliable and empathetic, while Vodafone scores better on tangibles and assurance. Both companies are competitive in responsiveness. The data suggests that while both telecom providers have their strengths, there is a clear need for each to strategically address weaker dimensions to enhance overall customer satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction

The level of customer satisfaction with telecommunications services in Qatar was evaluated using three key indicators: satisfaction with quality at a given price, satisfaction with service and support, and overall satisfaction. These indicators were rated on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "very dissatisfied" and 5 represented "very satisfied." The results suggest that customers of both Ooredoo and Vodafone are generally satisfied with their service providers. However, customers of Ooredoo consistently reported higher satisfaction levels across all three aspects when compared to Vodafone customers.

Specifically, Ooredoo received the highest mean score in the "service and support" category (4.25), followed closely by "quality at a given price" and "overall satisfaction" (both 4.20). In contrast, Vodafone's satisfaction ratings were notably lower, averaging 3.75 for quality, 3.85 for support, and 3.85 for overall satisfaction. These results indicate a clear satisfaction gap in favor of Ooredoo, suggesting that its customer service systems, value-for-money offerings, and general service quality are better aligned with customer expectations.

Table 3: Customer Satisfaction Levels with Telecom Service Providers

Satisfaction Item	Ooredoo Mean	Ooredoo S.D.	Vodafone Mean	Vodafone S.D.
Quality at a given price	4.20	1.03	3.75	0.99
Service and support	4.25	1.04	3.85	1.02
Overall satisfaction	4.20	1.05	3.85	1.04

Differences in Satisfaction by Demographics

Prior to conducting inferential analyses, several assumption checks were performed to ensure the robustness of the regression model.

- Normality was confirmed through the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > 0.05$) and Q-Q plots, which indicated approximately normal distributions of residuals.

- Linearity and homoscedasticity were examined via scatterplots of standardized residuals versus predicted values, showing no visible pattern or heteroscedasticity.
- Multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), with values ranging from 1.22 to 2.47, well below the acceptable threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2020).

These tests confirmed that the assumptions underlying multiple regression analysis were satisfactorily met, supporting the validity of the subsequent statistical findings.

To determine whether demographic characteristics influenced customer satisfaction, statistical tests were applied. The T-test was used to examine differences in satisfaction based on gender and nationality, while a one-way ANOVA tested differences related to educational qualification. The results show that no statistically significant differences exist between customer satisfaction levels when segmented by gender, nationality, or education level.

Table 4: Statistical Differences in Customer Satisfaction by Demographics

Variable	Test Type	Test Value (T/F)	p-value	Effect Size (η^2 or d)	Interpretation
Gender	t-test	1.002	0.461	d = 0.11	No significant difference
Nationality	t-test	0.980	0.543	d = 0.09	No significant difference
Education	ANOVA	1.003	0.456	$\eta^2 = 0.02$	No significant difference

For example, the T-value for nationality was 0.980 with a significance level of 0.543, indicating no meaningful difference between Qatari and non-Qatari customers. Similarly, satisfaction levels between males and females did not vary significantly, as the gender T-value stood at 1.002 with a significance of 0.461. Educational background also did not significantly affect satisfaction, with the ANOVA F-value recorded at 1.003 (significance = 0.456). These findings underscore that satisfaction is influenced more by service delivery than by customer demographics.

Post-hoc Tukey's HSD test confirmed the non-significance of educational differences ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that customer satisfaction in Qatar's telecommunications sector is consistent across demographic groups, reflecting the standardized nature of services. This outcome aligns with Alghamdi et al. (2019) and Alshehri and Meziane (2022), who reported that demographic factors have minimal influence on satisfaction levels in mature and digitally inclusive service markets.

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

To explore the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, both correlation and regression analyses were performed. The Pearson correlation results revealed that all five dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—are positively and significantly correlated with customer satisfaction, as shown in Table 4. The strongest correlation was observed between assurance and customer satisfaction ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing that customers place the greatest value on the professionalism, courtesy, and knowledge of service personnel. This was followed by reliability ($r = 0.539$, $p < 0.001$) and responsiveness ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that dependable and timely service are also critical drivers of satisfaction. The empathy dimension showed a moderate but significant relationship ($r = 0.358$, $p = 0.002$), while tangibles had the weakest—though still significant—association ($r = 0.256$, $p = 0.003$). These results suggest that while the physical appearance of facilities and technology contribute to satisfaction, intangible service attributes are far more influential.

Table 5: Correlation Between Service Quality Dimensions and Customer Satisfaction

Service Quality Dimension	r	p-value	95% CI (r)	Effect Size (Cohen's r^2)
Tangibles	0.256	0.003	[0.09, 0.39]	0.07 (small)
Reliability	0.539	0.000	[0.38, 0.67]	0.29 (large)
Responsiveness	0.478	0.000	[0.32, 0.61]	0.23 (medium-large)
Assurance	0.662	0.000	[0.51, 0.76]	0.44 (large)
Empathy	0.358	0.002	[0.18, 0.51]	0.13 (medium)

To further assess the predictive power of service quality on customer satisfaction, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The overall model was statistically significant ($F(5,94) = 60.01$, $p < 0.001$) with a strong correlation coefficient ($R = 0.873$) and an R^2 value of 0.762, indicating that approximately 76.2% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by the five service quality dimensions.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Service Quality Impact on Customer Satisfaction

Predictor	Standardized β	t-value	p-value	95% CI (β)	VIF
Tangibles	0.086	1.12	0.266	[-0.07, 0.21]	1.45
Reliability	0.243	3.08	0.003**	[0.09, 0.40]	2.31
Responsiveness	0.218	2.67	0.009**	[0.05, 0.38]	2.47
Assurance	0.342	4.72	0.000***	[0.19, 0.50]	1.89
Empathy	0.106	1.45	0.150	[-0.03, 0.23]	1.22

Model Summary: $R = 0.873$ | $R^2 = 0.762$ | Adjusted $R^2 = 0.749$ | $p < 0.001$

The regression results confirm that assurance, reliability, and responsiveness significantly predict customer satisfaction ($p < 0.01$), with assurance ($\beta = 0.342$) exerting the strongest influence. Tangibles and empathy, though positively related, did not significantly affect satisfaction levels. These findings highlight that customer in Qatar's telecommunications sector derive satisfaction primarily from the credibility, dependability, and responsiveness of service providers rather than from physical facilities or empathetic gestures alone.

Overall, the results underscore the importance of strengthening staff competence, reliability of service delivery, and prompt responsiveness to customer needs. Enhancing these key service quality dimensions can substantially improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the competitive positioning of telecom companies such as Ooredoo and Vodafone in Qatar.

Discussion of the Findings

The analysis of the data collected on service quality in Qatar's telecommunications sector reveals several key insights. Customers of both Vodafone and Ooredoo expressed overall satisfaction with the five core dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. However, differences were observed in how these dimensions were perceived between the two providers. Vodafone customers showed higher satisfaction in the area of tangibles, which includes physical facilities and equipment, while Ooredoo customers expressed greater satisfaction with the intangible service aspects, such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. This suggests that although all dimensions of service quality matter to customers, their relative importance and performance differ by provider. These findings are in line with the established SERVQUAL framework by [Parasuraman et al. \(1988\)](#), and are further supported by recent research, including that of [Al-Dmour et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Alshurideh et al. \(2021\)](#), who noted that customer evaluations of service quality are not uniform and are shaped by provider-specific practices and strategic orientations.

In terms of ranking the service quality dimensions, Ooredoo customers rated reliability highest and tangibles lowest, indicating that consistent and dependable service delivery is a primary concern. Conversely, Vodafone customers ranked assurance highest, reflecting the importance they place on employee competence and trustworthiness, while empathy was rated lowest. These variations emphasize the diverse expectations and perceptions held by customer bases of different providers. While earlier studies such as [Sirikit \(2002\)](#) emphasized tangibles as a crucial element in customer satisfaction within the telecom sector, more recent analyses suggest that in highly digitized and service-oriented markets like Qatar, reliability and assurance may hold more value for customers. This aligns with the findings of [Seth et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Islam and Rahman \(2021\)](#), who argue that in modern service economies, intangible elements such as trust, responsiveness, and competence often outweigh physical attributes in driving customer satisfaction.

The data also indicate that there are no statistically significant differences in service quality perceptions based on nationality, gender, or educational background. This suggests a broadly consistent experience across customer segments, reflecting a high degree of service standardization in the Qatari telecommunications market. These findings are consistent with those of [Alghamdi et al. \(2019\)](#) and [Alshehri and Meziane \(2022\)](#), who found similar patterns in

other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. These results highlight that demographic variable may no longer play a significant role in shaping service evaluations when providers offer universally accessible and standardized services.

Regarding overall customer satisfaction, both Vodafone and Ooredoo customers were generally satisfied with the quality of services, particularly with respect to pricing, customer support, and reliability. However, Ooredoo customers reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction. This result is consistent with earlier studies such as those by [Trivellas et al. \(2010\)](#) and [Sharma \(2014\)](#), and is further validated by more recent research by [Ameen et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Al-Mutairi et al. \(2023\)](#), who concluded that telecom customers tend to express moderate to high levels of satisfaction, but the degree of satisfaction can vary depending on the perceived quality of support services and network stability.

Similarly, customer satisfaction did not differ significantly by demographic factors, such as nationality, education, or gender. This supports the conclusion that customer satisfaction is broadly stable across different segments of the population in Qatar. This finding reinforces the idea that in markets characterized by digital inclusion and high service penetration, customer satisfaction is shaped more by service attributes than by demographic variables. Studies by [Ahmed and Mostafa \(2020\)](#) and [Alnaser et al. \(2022\)](#) similarly concluded that in digital service sectors, demographic variables have a minimal effect on satisfaction outcomes, as customer expectations are increasingly aligned due to exposure to similar service standards and experiences.

The study also revealed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between all five dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction. Among these, assurance showed the strongest correlation with satisfaction, indicating that the trustworthiness, knowledge, and courtesy of service personnel are highly valued by customers. Tangibles showed the weakest correlation, which suggests that physical elements, while still relevant, play a secondary role in shaping overall satisfaction. These findings corroborate those of [Ojo \(2010\)](#) and [Agyapong \(2011\)](#), and are strongly supported by recent contributions from [Nguyen et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Othman and Noor \(2022\)](#), who emphasize the pivotal role of assurance and reliability in service-based customer relationships. However, the results stand in contrast to [Arslan \(2015\)](#), who found that only empathy and reliability significantly affected satisfaction. This contrast may reflect contextual differences, as customer priorities can vary across countries and over time, particularly in rapidly evolving digital service environments.

Furthermore, regression analysis confirmed that service quality is a strong predictor of customer satisfaction, explaining 76% of the variance. This indicates that improving service quality across the five dimensions can have a profound impact on how satisfied customers feel with their telecom provider. These results reaffirm the foundational work of [Hutchinson et al. \(2009\)](#) and [Ojo \(2010\)](#), and are consistent with recent studies by [Alzoubi et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Yahya and Ameen \(2024\)](#), which emphasize that in competitive and technologically advanced telecom markets, high service quality is not just a differentiator but a strategic imperative for customer retention and loyalty.

In sum, the analysis underscores the critical importance of continuous improvement in service quality to maintain and enhance customer satisfaction. It also highlights the nuanced ways in which different aspects of service quality influence customer perceptions, reaffirming the value of tailored service strategies for different market segments within a broadly standardized service environment.

Theoretical Contribution

This study extends SERVQUAL research by providing empirical evidence from Qatar, a rapidly digitizing telecommunications market. It demonstrates that intangible service dimensions—assurance, reliability, and responsiveness—often outweigh physical aspects in driving customer satisfaction. The findings emphasize the necessity of contextual adaptation when applying service quality models in different markets, especially in highly digitized service economies.

Limitations

1. The study was conducted within a single country (Qatar), limiting generalizability.
2. Self-reported survey data may introduce perceptual bias.
3. The focus on two telecom providers may not fully capture sector-wide trends.
4. Cross-sectional design provides a snapshot in time, limiting insights into longitudinal changes in customer satisfaction.

Future Research Directions

- Expand the study to multiple countries in the GCC or Middle East to compare service quality perceptions across markets.
- Employ longitudinal designs to track changes in satisfaction over time and assess the impact of digital transformation initiatives.
- Integrate qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups) to capture nuanced customer experiences.
- Explore emerging service quality dimensions, such as digital experience, data privacy, sustainability practices, and AI-enabled customer support.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that customers of different telecommunication service providers in Qatar perceive and rank the dimensions of service quality in distinct ways, reflecting diverse expectations and experiences with their providers. While both Vodafone and Ooredoo customers reported general satisfaction with the service quality delivered, Ooredoo customers exhibited a higher level of satisfaction overall, particularly with intangible aspects such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings confirmed a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between all five dimensions of service quality—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—and overall customer satisfaction. Moreover, regression analysis revealed that service quality accounts for 76% of the variance in customer satisfaction, underscoring the critical role service quality plays in shaping customer perceptions and loyalty. These insights suggest that improving service quality is not only a customer expectation but also a strategic necessity for telecom service providers operating in a competitive and evolving digital landscape like Qatar.

Implications

The study's findings carry important implications for both researchers and practitioners. For service providers, the strong association between service quality and customer satisfaction underscores the need for continuous monitoring and enhancement of service delivery. The SERVQUAL model offers a practical framework for assessing and addressing customer perceptions in a structured manner. Since all five dimensions of service quality were found to significantly influence customer satisfaction, telecom managers should adopt a comprehensive approach to service management rather than prioritizing certain dimensions over others. For Ooredoo, efforts should be directed toward enhancing tangible aspects of the service—such as staff appearance, equipment, and physical facilities—to align with the high performance in intangible service aspects. For Vodafone, a strategic focus should be placed on improving the responsiveness and empathy of staff, ensuring that they are not only competent but also emotionally intelligent, supportive, and proactive in customer interactions. Training, performance incentives, and digital tools can all be leveraged to support employees in achieving service excellence.

Limitations

Despite providing valuable insights, this study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the data were collected from a relatively small sample of 92 customers, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across the broader population of telecom users in Qatar. Second, the research relied exclusively on a structured survey questionnaire composed of closed-ended items, which may have restricted the depth of customer insights and failed to capture more nuanced experiences or expectations. Third, the study was narrowly focused on exploring the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. It did not account for other potentially influential factors such as pricing strategies, network coverage, technological innovations, customer loyalty programs, or brand image, all of which could further shape customer perceptions and satisfaction.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should aim to expand the scope and depth of investigation into customer satisfaction within the telecommunications sector. One potential direction is to explore additional determinants of satisfaction, such as pricing competitiveness, service customization, the role of digital service platforms (e.g., mobile apps, chatbots), and post-sale support. Longitudinal studies may also be valuable in examining how customer satisfaction evolves over time in response to changes in service quality, technology adoption, or market competition. Moreover, qualitative methods

such as interviews or focus groups could be used alongside surveys to gain richer, more contextualized understandings of customer expectations and experiences. Lastly, comparative studies involving other regional telecom providers across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries could help benchmark Qatar's telecom service standards and provide insights into region-specific customer preferences and service innovation strategies.

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