

The moderating role of uncertainty avoidance in the relationship between services quality and customers satisfaction

الدور المعدل لتجنب الأليقين في العلاقة بين جودة الخدمات ورضا الزبائن

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Received: 22/08/2020

Accepted : 14/12/2020

Published : 10/01/2021

Abstract:

This paper aims at testing the moderating effect of the cultural dimension 'uncertainty avoidance' on the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction with regards to tourism services in the Algerian Sahara. A survey was conducted and the data was collected from 192 tourists by means of a questionnaire. Partial Least Squares SEM was employed and measurement model as well as structural model was estimated for data processing. The results showed a nonexistent significant moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance in the relationship between services quality and customer satisfaction but a strong positive relationship between services quality and customer satisfaction. Further hypotheses have been tested and discussed in more details below.

Key words: Services quality; SERVPERF model; Customer satisfaction; Cultural value; Uncertainty avoidance.

Jel Classification Codes : L80 ; Z19

ملخص:

تهدف هذه المقالة إلى اختبار التأثير المعدل للبعد الثقافي "تجنب عدم التأكد" على العلاقة بين جودة الخدمة المدركة ورضا الزبائن فيما يتعلق بالخدمات السياحية في الصحراء الجزائرية. تم إجراء تحقيق وجمع البيانات من 192 سائحا عن طريق استبيان. تم استخدام المربعات الصغرى الجزئية SEM و تقدير نموذج القياس وكذلك النموذج الهيكلية لمعالجة البيانات. أظهرت النتائج عدم وجود تأثير معدل تجنب عدم التأكد في العلاقة بين جودة الخدمات ورضا الزبائن ولكن وجود علاقة إيجابية قوية بين جودة الخدمات ورضا العملاء. تم اختبار مزيد من الفرضيات ومناقشتها بمزيد من التفاصيل أدناه.

الكلمات المفتاح: جودة الخدمات; نموذج SERVPERF; رضا الزبائن; القيمة الثقافية; تجنب الأليقين.

التصنيف JEL L80; Z19

Introduction:

Interest in quality of service has significantly increased, and studies have shown that it is a prerequisite for the success and survival of service firms in a tough competitive environment (Yilmaz, 2009).

In recent years, especially tourism establishments have faced great challenges due to the changing nature of the travel industry. Many factors such as the growing expectations of tourists, the changing style of service offers, the development of information technology, increased competition in international markets, increasingly competitive prices and the emergence of new quality-conscious tourists with increasingly varied needs, have contributed to their difficulty in maintaining their competitive edge. As a result, many companies are focusing their competitive strategy on improving service quality, since offering high quality service leads to greater customer satisfaction, which increases the number of repeated visits, which ultimately translates into increased market share and improved profitability for tourism service companies. (LeBlanc, 1992; Oh & Parks 1997; Gržinić, 2007; Kapiki, 2012).

Empirical evidence show that service quality and customer satisfaction are key issues in several service areas, like in hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, health care, advertising and retail banking, and especially the tourism and travel industry (Karatepe & Avci 2002).

Cronin and Taylor (1992) argue that quality of service is directly related to tourist satisfaction, which leads to loyalty, business success, repeat visits by tourists and a positive image of the country. This is difficult to achieve and can be easily lost. This importance of service quality for tourism companies has prompted many researchers to examine the factors that influence customers' perceptions of service quality in order to better understand and anticipate customers' evaluations of services. Media advertising, employee emotions, service guarantee, word-of-mouth, past experience, personal needs are factors considered to influence customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction levels (Parasuraman and al, 1985; Pugh, 2001; Sum and al, 2002).

However, there is also evidence that culture can also be another factor influencing the perception of service quality. Researchers have found that there are differences in perceptions of service quality and satisfaction levels between customers from different cultural backgrounds and several cross-cultural studies have demonstrated this (Choi & Chu, 2000; Crotts & Erdmann, 2000; Herbig & Genestre, 1996; Liu and al., 2001; Reisinger & Turner, 2002b; Winsted, 1997). The importance of the role of culture and its impact on the market has led some authors to study the effect of culture on the perception of the services quality. However, most of them have conducted their research within Hofstede's original cultural framework, which is based on sampling national cultures. Starting from the concept that individuals from the same nation may well have completely different cultures from each other, the objective of this paper is to investigate the role of culture in the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction at the individual level.

I- Literature review and research hypotheses:

I-1- Service quality:

I-1-1 Service quality definition:

Service quality has been defined in various ways: it focuses on the satisfaction of needs and requirements, and the extent to which the service provided meets client expectations. It is increasingly recognized as a key strategic value by service organizations.

Zeithaml and al. (1996), stated that quality of service is "the consumer's overall impression of the efficiency of the organization and its services" (See in Attalah, 2015). Kleynhans & Zhou (2012), asserted that it is "the consumer's assessment of the overall excellence or superiority of the service offered" (See in Attalah, 2015).

Several authors have highlighted the main benefits to be gained from successful service quality. These benefits lie in attracting new customers, developing customer relationships, increasing customer and employee satisfaction and loyalty, improving the company's image, increasing sales and market share, and improving company performance (Reichfeld & Sasser, 1990 ; Crosby, 1991; Adil, 2012)

Perceived service quality is an overall service-related consumer judgement or attitude resulting from a comparison between consumers' service expectations and their perception of the actual performance of the service (Grönroos, 1984 ; Berry, Zeithaml and Parasuraman, 1985 ; Adil and al, 2013).

Quality in tourism implies the satisfaction of product and service needs, as well as consumer requirements and expectations, at an acceptable price, according to mutually agreed contractual conditions and the underlying quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, etc. (UNWTO, 2003, See in Attalah, 2015).

Furthermore, quality of service has been defined by Eraqi (2006) "as a philosophy that goes beyond the management of the organization and continuous improvement in order to retain customers and achieve their satisfaction, which is the essential determinant of the success of tourist establishments" (see in Attallah, 2015).

According to what was defined above, to succeed in a competitive tourism market, a tourism company or destination must ensure that it provides the goods and services that the customer wants, respecting quality and deadlines. This leads to customer satisfaction and an adequate level of profit.

I-1-2 Service quality and customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction has been defined as "the consumer's response to the feeling of fulfillment related to consumption". It is a judgment that a product or service has provided a pleasant level of satisfaction to customer after consumption, including lower or higher levels of satisfaction "(Oliver, 1997, P.62).

There is fundamental agreement in the literature that service quality and customer satisfaction are conceptually distinct but closely related constructs (Parasuraman and al. 1994 ; Dabholkar, 1995; Sureshchandar and al., 2002).

An explanation to clarify the difference between the two suggests that the perceived quality of the service is a form of attitude, an overall long-term assessment, while satisfaction is a specific measure to the transaction (Parasuraman et al. 1988; Bitner, 1990; Bolton & Drew, 1991).

Crompton and MacKay (1989), argue that "satisfaction is a psychological outcome emerging from experience, whereas quality of service is about the attributes of the service itself". They also add that "a high satisfaction score can result even when the perceived

quality of the service is low because, for example, social group interactions are positive enough to compensate for low quality service".

As a result, the conceptualisation of the relationship between service quality and satisfaction has become a central issue, but first the quality level of existing services must be measured from the customers' point of view by a reliable and valid measurement tool. In this context, several models have been used to assess the quality of services offered by tourism businesses.

I-1-3 The service quality measures and dimensions (SERVQUAL and SERVPERF):

Consumers' perception of service quality is a complex process. As a result, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985, 1988) developed and refined a service quality measurement instrument called SERVQUAL. The SERVQUAL model is based on the identification of gaps between customer expectations and their perception of the actual performance of service providers. In other words, the service quality score can be measured by subtracting the customer perception score from the customer expectation score. If expectations are met or exceeded, the quality of service is perceived to be satisfactory (Yilmaz, 2009). Service quality measurement tool SERVQUAL initially consisted of ten original dimensions (Parasuraman and al. 1985), which were later grouped into five generic dimensions, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Parasuraman and al. 1991). These are composed of 22 pairs of items to identify and measure gaps between client expectations and perceptions of service quality.

McDougall and Levesque (1994) have argued that knowing the relative importance of each dimension of service quality allows managers to focus on those dimensions that offer the greatest potential to improve service quality for clients.

The SERVQUAL instrument has been revised and widely adopted to explain the perception of quality of service by consumers in the general services sector such as banking services, credit card services, repair and maintenance and long distance telephone calls services or in particular in the hotel and tourism industry (Bigne et al., 2003). However, despite its contribution to the academic and business world, the SERVQUAL model has been the subject of several criticisms on both theoretical and operational aspects. Researchers have been sceptical about the applicability of these dimensions to the assessment of service quality in other service industries (Finn and Lamb, 1991; Cronin and Taylor, 1992). Other researchers such as (Cronin and Taylor 1992, 1994; Babakus and Boller 1992; Brady, Cronin and Brand 2002) have pointed out that expectations do not provide additional information for measuring service quality. Hughes (1991) stated that tourists may be satisfied with the service they received although their experiences did not meet their expectations (see in Attallah, 2015).

Carman (1990) adds that the SERVQUAL study measured respondents' expectations and perceptions at the same time, while they can not be administered at the same time considering the difficulty of establishing contact with the sample of the study before their arrival at the hotel. The administration of the questionnaire therefore did not follow a before-after approach.

As a result of these criticisms and disagreements, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed a performance-based model to measure the quality of service, called SERVPERF (performance-based only measurement), composed of the 22 elements of perception of the SERVQUAL scale, excluding thus any consideration of expectations, therefore reducing the number of elements to measure from 44 to 22. They suggested that the gap-based assessment of service quality between expectations and performance derived from Parasuraman and al

(1985, 1988) is insufficient, and argued that the performance is the measure that best explains consumers' perceptions of service quality and that measuring service quality based only on perception is sufficient. Much empirical research has relied on performance-based measures of service quality (e.g. Babakus and Boller, 1992; Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Churchill & Surprenant 1982). These measures have more explanatory power than those based on the expectations-performance gap.

In addition, by testing the model on service industries such as banking, dry cleaning, fast food and pest control, the results showed that the SERVPERF model better explains variation in the overall measure of service quality, has greater predictive power and provides more effective measurement results compared to other measures of service quality (e.g. Choi & Chu (2001), Cunningham & al. (2004), Juwaheer (2004), Poon & Lock-Teng Low (2005), Mey & Mohamed (2010), Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, (2011), Adetunji & al. (2013), Oña & al. (2014), see in (Attalah, 2015). Interpretation of these results provided further evidence of the superiority of the SERVPERF approach to measuring service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1992, 1994). For this reason, this article has adopted this view.

Furthermore, the SERVPERF model is based on the assumption that quality of service is an antecedent of customer satisfaction, and that customer satisfaction has a significant impact on repeat customer visits, thus reflecting the company's performance. In addition, previous studies have identified that the perception of service quality has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction (Cronin & al. 2000; Furrer & al. 2000; mey & al. 2006; Reimann & al. 2008; Ha & Jang, 2010). Based on the results of these empirical studies and their theoretical foundations, this study proposed the following hypothesis :

***Hypothesis 1** : Service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction*

II- Cultural value

II-1 Culture's conceptualization

Values and the most fundamental manifestation of culture, are defined as "broad tendencies to prefer a certain state of affairs to others" (Hofstede 1980, p. 19). According to Hofstede (1991), culture is like the thoughts, feelings and actions of human beings. He has drawn a very interesting analogy in which he uses computer imagery to explain the role of culture in human life. He compares the determining role of software in the functioning of a computer to the fact that culture is a human impulse, and that just as the computer which becomes useless without software, human beings could be meaningless without culture. He therefore highlights that culture is the software of the human mind.

Cultural differences are often presented as the basis for specific "stereotypes" given to travellers who come from a certain nationality (Crotts & Erdmann, 2000), so that it is assumed that what is shown or how tourists behave is based on their national culture. But generalizing a cultural stereotype of one country directly with people from other countries could be misleading (Yoo, Donthu & Lenartowicz, 2011; Irawanto and al., 2011) (See in Rinuastuti, 2014).

Culture in intercultural research has been defined at the national level. However, it remains to be measured and clarified whether the individual in a state indicates a cultural orientation that is consistent with the national culture. Some researchers (Keillor & al. 2004; Kongsompong & al. 2009; Patterson & al. 2006; Patterson & Mattila 2008 ; see in Rinuastuti and al., 2014) have argued that marketers would be more successful if they focused directly on consumer characteristics rather than country characteristics. This conclusion is based on

the argument that individual values are more accurate predictors of individual behaviour. Thus, according to Prasongsukarn (2009), cultural orientation is better related to the attitudes and behaviours of individuals or consumers.

This paper aims to describe the importance of carrying out the measurement of cultural reasons at the individual level, in particular its application in the study of tourist behaviour. Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of cultural values remain a valuable tool for understanding an individual's fundamental cultural orientation.

II-2 Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Hofstede (1980) established four dimensions of national culture: power distance (PDI), individualism/collectivism (IDV), masculinity/femininity (MAS) and uncertainty avoidance (UAV). Based on their research in Asia, Hofstede and Bond (1988) found a new dimension, which was then added to Hofstede's (1997, 2001) research as a fifth dimension: long-term orientation.

The dimension of power distance: indicates the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is unevenly distributed (Hofstede 1991, p.27); *The long-term orientation dimension:* reflects the extent to which a society presents a pragmatic, forward-looking perspective rather than a conventional, short-term historical view; *Masculinity* is the dominant value in society that emphasizes hardship/self-assertion and enables people to earn money as well as other material goods, *femininity* is the term used to describe the extent to which the dominant values in society emphasize the relationship between human beings; *The individualism/collectivism dimension:* is defined by the extent to which individuals in a culture place their own interests ahead of those of the immediate family and other social groups, or the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of a group; Finally, *the dimension of uncertainty avoidance*, is defined by the extent to which people in a culture feel threatened by uncertain situations that can not be predicted or are unclear, it refers to people's tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty in everyday life.

These five dimensions of cultural values can be used to make important predictions of cross-cultural value differences, including perceived quality of services and customer satisfaction (Reimann, 2014). However, for the purposes of this study, only the uncertainty avoidance dimension is considered.

II-3 The relationship between the study's constructs :

Previous research on perceived quality of services reveals a growing attention to cultural values and their influence on client satisfaction, using findings from Hofstede (1980) or related cultural models (Donthu and Yoo 1998; Furrer, Liu, and Sudharshan 2000; Liu, Furrer, and Sudharshan 2001) (See in Reimann, 2014).

There is also a literature that empirically studies not only the different perceptions of service quality among customers from different cultures, but also how culture influences consumers' perceptions of service quality and their level of satisfaction (Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Furrer, Liu, & Sudharshan, 2000; Mattila 1999; Winsted 1997).

Differences in cultural values help to identify factors contributing to differences in perception and, therefore, to assess the effectiveness of service providers' performance from the perspective of the culturally different client.

Emphasizing the importance of variation in the degree of the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance which, as defined in the above, is "the extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations" (Hofstede 1991, p.113). Thus, uncertainty can have two sources: risk, which implies a high probability of failure of an event, and ambiguity, which implies an unknown probability of occurrence of an event.

Risk or ambiguity creates uncertainty in which clients feel uncomfortable. Wong (2004) argued that strong uncertainty avoidance is likely to have a significant impact on satisfaction and buyback intent, as individuals with high levels of uncertainty would be reluctant to choose uncertain situations in an attempt to minimize the potential for service failures. These clients actively avoid uncertainty through planning and risk aversion, while clients with low uncertainty avoidance are more accepting of uncertain situations and embarrassing risk (Nakata and Sivakoumar, 1996).

Reimann (2008) argues that the uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. In cultures where uncertainty is strongly avoided, the effect of perceived service quality on customer satisfaction is stronger than in cultures where uncertainty is weakly avoided. On the basis of these arguments, we consider the uncertainty avoidance to be particularly critical for the study of the relationship between perceived service quality and satisfaction. In order to fully understand the role of uncertainty avoidance in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 2 : Uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction.

Considering the differences described above between low and high uncertainty cultures, customers from cultures where the degree of uncertainty avoidance is relatively high have a much lower tolerance for ambiguity in other words, these customers do not accept unclear situations, and any deviation from normal variation is not accepted. Therefore, to reduce uncertainty, all dimensions of service quality are important (Hofstede 1980, 2001, see in Reimann, 2014).

Donthu and Yoo (1998) argue that customers who strongly avoid uncertainty would use tangible elements as a substitute for service quality, as these characteristics are visible evidence of service quality. They also add that visible/tangible evidence would help them reduce their perception of risk in service situations.

Thus, we emit the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a : The effect of tangibility is greater for high uncertainty avoidance.

Leaning on Hofstede's approach (1991), Furrer (2000) argues that in cultures where uncertainty is little avoided and where uncertainty is a normal feature of life, service situations do not create significant differences in customers' perceptions of the relative importance of the dimensions of service quality. On the basis of the above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2b : Low uncertainty avoidance customers place less importance on service quality dimensions than high uncertainty avoidance customers.

III- Methodology

After literature review, this research adopted the SERVPERF model, supporting the argument that the SERVPERF model (performance-only measurement) is superior for measuring service quality performance from the perspective of hotel guests (Boulding and al., 1993; Cronin and Taylor, 1992, Bebko, 2000; Brown, Churchill, & Peter, 1993; Cronin, Brady, & Hult, 2000; Parasuraman and al., 1996). See (Attalah, 2015 ; And li 2010).

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, both primary and secondary data were used. Secondary data were collected from various journal articles and books, which provided a better understanding of the studied topic. Primary data were collected by administering a questionnaire that consisted of four main sections; the first section was designed to identify respondent profiles, questions related to demographic data such as: gender, education level, occupation and nationality were asked. The second section was designed to measure the perception of service quality by hotel guests. The third section was designed to measure overall customer satisfaction, and the final section was devoted for measuring the cultural dimension "uncertainty avoidance". These data were then analysed and evaluated to provide evidence to the validity or invalidity of our hypotheses.

III-1 Measure instruments:

In this study, the questionnaire included twenty-two questions from the SERVPERF measurement (performance-only items) related to quality of service, instead of the SERVPERF original items of Cronin and Taylor, 1992, and a question to assess overall customers satisfaction. Both measures were adopted from Mey and al. (2006), as the adaptation was more appropriate to the condition of the tourism industry. However, after interviewing tourism professionals two items were eliminated due to redundancy. Regarding Hofstede's cultural dimension "uncertainty avoidance", as it was originally operationalized to measure work-related values, and our sample is composed of hotel guests and that the context of the study is a tourism service situation based on the individual level, we chose to use a different set of elements adapted by Furrer 2000.

Some researchers have argued that the 5-point scale works better and increases the rate and quality of responses, and that respondents have difficulty understanding and using the 7-point Likert scale (Babakus and Mangold 1992; Johns, Avci and Karatepe 2002). Therefore, each variable, namely the perception of service quality and the cultural dimension of "uncertainty avoidance", was accompanied by a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). For the measure of overall satisfaction, a 5-point scale was used, as follows: (1= not satisfied at all to 5 perfectly satisfied).

III-2 Sample and data collection :

The study population consisted of tourists visiting four-star hotels from september 2019 to january 2020. These hotels are located in three cities in southern Algeria - Timimoune, El Goléa and Taghit. Two reasons led us to choose this region : the algerian Sahara is considered to be the main and the favorite destination of both foreign and algerian tourists, and it is is the most tourism developed in Algeria.

Respondents were selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires during their stay. A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed in the selected hotels. However, only 200 hotel guests agreed to participate in the survey. Of the 200 questionnaires collected, 8 were eliminated due to incompleteness and 192 were considered useful for the analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis was performed by using Smart PLS one of the leading software tools for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) version 3. The reason why we choose to

use this tool is because of the small size of our sample as well as the exploratory purposes of our model.

IV- Data analysis and discussion :

IV-1 Response rates :

Among the participants, 76.7% were male travelers, and 23.3% were female. In terms of education level, about 63.6% reported that they are university graduates, 25 % were high school graduates or less, and 11.4% were high post graduates. In term sof occupation, about 43.9% were company employees, 23.7% were businessman, followed by students 19.3%, 7 % retired, and 6.1 % others. About 51% were algerians, 49% were from differents nationalities (french, spanish, moroccan, tunisian, portuguese, egyptian, british and americian).

IV-2 Convergent Validity :

In what follows, we will analyse the convergent and discriminant validity of the measurement model. This operation will allow us to validate our measurement scale, in order to proceed to the stage of estimating the structural model.

Table n°1 : Results of Measurement Model – Convergent Validity

Constructs	Items	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE (Average Variance Extracted)	Cronbach's α
Reliability	REL1	0.807	0.887	0.664	0.830
	REL2	0.842			
	REL3	0.827			
	REL4	0.627			
	REL5	0.718			
Responsivness	RES1	0.861	0.920	0.792	0.868
	RES2	0.925			
	RES3	0.883			
Assurance	A1	0.767	0.846	0.648	0.730
	A2	0.828			
	A3	0.817			
Empathy	E1	0.931	0.938	0.835	0.901
	E2	0.927			
	E3	0.883			
Tangibility	T1	0.852	0.929	0.654	0.911
	T2	0.827			
	T3	0.840			
	T4	0.785			
	T5	0.752			
	T6	0.737			
	T7	0.819			
	T8	0.426			
Overall Satisfaction	Mono item	Mono item	Mono item	-	-
Uncertainty avoidance	UA1	0.475	0.842	0,728	0,626
	UA2	0.844			
	UA3	0.795			
	UA4	0.052			

The results displayed in table 1 indicate that the composite reliability (CR) of the model variables, Percieved Service Quality and Uncertainty Avoidance is higher than (CR > 0,70), and all their commonalities are acceptable (AVE > 0.50). No modifications are to be considered. On the other hand, most of the indicators are up to standard, the scores of the items (Factor Loadings) are all higher than (0.70) except for four items (REL4, T8, UA1 and UA4), which record scores are lower than (0.70), this led us, according to the recommendations of Hair and al., (2017) to delete them. The measurement parameters of the constructs concerned have improved. The Cronbach's Alpha value of the variables: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility is satisfactory, but the value of the variable "Uncertainty Avoidance " is very low. By deleting item n°4, the value of the Alpha increases to 0.56, which is still low, we then delete item n°1 to obtain a Cronbach's Alpha equal to 0.64, it still remains below the acceptable value which is 0.7. However, according to Garson (2016, P. 64), we can accept a value of 0.6 if it is for exploratory purposes. As it is the case of our model, we accept this value as an indication of scale' reliability.

IV-3 Discriminant Validity :

This part of the data analysis will review two indicators: the FORNELL-LARKER criterion, to compare the square roots of the AVEs with the inter-constructed correlations, followed by the cross-scores of the items, through the Cross-Loading criterion.

Table n° 2 : Variable Correlation (Fornell-Larker Criterion)

	Assur	Emp	Rel	Res	Satisf	Tang	UA
Assurance	0,805						
Empathy	0,666	0,914					
Reliability	0,737	0,741	0,815				
Responsivness	0,723	0,750	0,792	0,890			
Satisfaction	0,642	0,566	0,637	0,663	1.000		
Tangibility	0,781	0,644	0,725	0,684	0,714	0,809	
Uncertainty avoidance	0,154	0,257	0,202	0,254	0,203	0,246	0,853

The FORNELL-LARKER criterion (Fornell and Larker, 1981) is studied to ensure that the variance shared by a latent variable with its indicators is greater than its variance shared with the other variables of the model. On the other hand, the cross contribution of the factors will allow us to verify that the items in the model are correlated only with the latent variable assigned to them (Hair and al., 2017).

By comparing the square roots of the AVEs with the inter-constructed correlations through the Fornell-Larker criterion, we find that for each construct, the square root of the AVE is greater than the inter-constructed correlations, which means that the variables are different enough. Thus, this indicator is validated.

Table n° 3 : Cross-loading Factors

Items	Assurance	Empathy	Rel	Res	Satisf	Tang	UA
A1	0,767	0,567	0,524	0,603	0,449	0,543	0,084
A2	0,828	0,420	0,575	0,554	0,596	0,722	0,131
A3	0,817	0,653	0,685	0,601	0,487	0,598	0,154
E1	0,615	0,931	0,674	0,699	0,543	0,607	0,201
E2	0,568	0,927	0,668	0,688	0,504	0,557	0,195
E3	0,642	0,883	0,689	0,667	0,502	0,601	0,311
REL1	0,604	0,564	0,844	0,628	0,560	0,614	0,099
REL2	0,627	0,644	0,856	0,656	0,533	0,651	0,207
REL3	0,663	0,617	0,833	0,698	0,516	0,600	0,161
REL5	0,502	0,595	0,719	0,602	0,462	0,488	0,201
RES1	0,640	0,687	0,722	0,861	0,570	0,583	0,143
RES2	0,627	0,652	0,707	0,925	0,600	0,636	0,316
RES3	0,662	0,664	0,687	0,883	0,600	0,605	0,214
S	0,642	0,566	0,637	0,663	1,000	0,714	0,203
T1	0,657	0,534	0,593	0,528	0,579	0,860	0,150
T2	0,667	0,532	0,587	0,542	0,593	0,836	0,193
T3	0,657	0,569	0,649	0,547	0,568	0,845	0,181
T4	0,660	0,470	0,562	0,538	0,542	0,791	0,172
T5	0,595	0,495	0,546	0,543	0,521	0,774	0,318
T6	0,524	0,529	0,569	0,581	0,561	0,728	0,240
T7	0,653	0,514	0,591	0,586	0,658	0,818	0,157
UA2	0,134	0,247	0,152	0,283	0,167	0,212	0,842
UA3	0,129	0,193	0,192	0,155	0,179	0,208	0,864

Table 3 is a double-entry matrix, with the items of our model in rows and the corresponding latent variables in columns. We note a strong correlation of the items with their respective variables (highlighted values), which indicates that all the items in our model measure the desired phenomenon.

At the end of these results, we can affirm that our measurement model is fitted and can be used for structural estimation.

IV-4 Analysis of the overall quality of the model and hypotheses test :

Table n°4 : Coefficient of determination R²

Construct	R ²	Result
Satisfaction	0,540	Moderate

Chin (1998), suggested that the value of R^2 that above 0.67 considered high, while values ranging from 0.33 to 0.67 are moderate, whereas values between 0.19 to 0.33 are weak and any values less than 0.19 are unacceptable.

We find that 54% of the variance of overall satisfaction is explained by perceived service quality, indicating that a relationship exists but that it is moderate.

Table n°5 : The effect size f^2 test :

	f^2	RESULT
Service Quality -> Satisfaction	1.013	Large effect
Uncertainty Avoidance -> Satisfaction	0,000	No effect

The f^2 test analyzes the size of the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. This measure is known as the effect size (f^2). It can be interpreted as follows (Hair and al., 2017):

- $f^2 > 0.35$: large effect ;
- $0.15 < f^2 < 0.35$: moderate effect ;
- $0.02 < f^2 < 0.15$: reduced effect ;
- $f^2 < 0.02$: null effect.

From the results showed in table 5, the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction is well present, and wide enough. However, the effect of uncertainty avoidance on satisfaction is null.

Table n°6: Predictive Relevance Q^2 Test (Stone-Geisser)

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
Satisfaction	212,000	102,403	0,517

The estimation of the Q^2 coefficient will allow us to evaluate the predictive power of our structural model, using the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 coefficient (Predictive Relevance). According to Hair and al. (2017), a value of $Q^2 > 0$ means that our model would have predictive power.

As presented in table n°6 above, the Q^2 value is greater than 0, indicating that the model applied has predictive power.

Model quality analysis GoF (Godness of Fit):

The GoF is usually calculated in the case of LISREL modelling, but it has recently been incorporated into PLS modelling to measure the overall quality of the model (structural and measurement). According to Henseler and Sarstedt (2013), the GoF is obtained by the formula :

$$GoF = \sqrt{R^2 * AVE}$$

We note that this index takes into consideration a mean value of the structural model (R^2), and a mean value of the measurement model (AVE), in order to determine the overall quality of the model. According to Wetzels, et al. (2009) the GoF values are interpreted as follows :

- $GoF < 0.10$ Modeling is unsuccessful ;

- $0.1 < \text{GoF} < 0.25$ the quality of the model is poor ;
- $0.25 < \text{GoF} < 0.36$ the quality of the model is average ;
- $\text{GoF} > 0.36$ the quality of the model is very good.

GoF = 0,602. We estimate that the GoF is high enough to consider that our PLS model is valid.

IV-5 Hypotheses test :

Table n°7: Path Coefficient of the Research Hypotheses

Hypo	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T- Value	P- Value	Decision
H1	Percieved Service Quality -> Overall Satisfaction	0,733	0,040	18,395	0,000	Accepted
H2	Uncertainty avoidance -> percieved service quality – overall satisfaction	-0.011	0.054	0.212	0.832	Rejected

Significant relationship at $p^{**} < 0.01$, $p^* < 0.05$

The relationship of the percieved service quality with the overall satisfaction is significant ($t = 19.779$, $p > 0.00$), hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted. However, the results obtained for hypothesis 2 allow us to deduce the absence of a moderating effect for the variables studied. $P=0.8532$ is therefore greater than 0.05, which leads us to reject the hypothesis of the moderating effect of uncertainty avoidance in the relationship between percieved service quality and tourists satisfaction.

Table n°8 : Hypothesis H1a test

	Path (HUA)	Coefficients	Std. Error (HUA)	t-Value (HUA)	p-Value (HUA)
A -> HUA	0.126		0.188	0.669	0.504
E -> HUA	0.025		0.159	0.155	0.877
Rel-> HUA	0.374		0.222	1.685	0.093
Res-> HUA	0.397		0.232	1.713	0.088
T -> HUA	0.096		0.152	0.630	0.529

To test this hypothesis, multi-group analysis (MGA) was conducted. The moderating variable uncertainty avoidance was first categorised into two groups, high and low. Hence, the median split was used for the purpose of this study as suggested by Ping (1996) who argues that this method allows each group to have adequate sample size. The path coefficient of the high uncertainty avoidance group and tangibility shows that the relationship between the two variables is nonexistent, t and p values 0.63 and 0.529 respectively confirm it. More significant values are for the other dimensions, for example, responsiveness which records a strong effect with a path coefficient = 0.397, followed by Reliability (PC = 0.374), no effect essentially for Assurance and Empathy. However, still not significant relationships, wich lead us to conclude that there is no real difference between tangibility and other service quality dimensions and high uncertainty avoidance customers, so that tangibility has no

greater effect on the high uncertainty avoidance tourists. As a result, our hypothesis is rejected.

Table n°9 : Comparisons of Path Coefficients and T-value for High and Low uncertainty avoidance

	Path Coefficients	Std. Error	t-Value	p-Value	LLCI	ULCI
HUA -> SQ	0.119	0.097	1.225	0.222	-0.152	0.260
LUA -> SQ	-0.198	0.330	0.600	0.549	-0.580	0.497

From table 9 above, it can be seen that there is no significant relationship between service quality dimensions and low as well as high uncertainty avoidance customers (PC = -0.198, T student = 0.600 and p = 0.546 > 0.05), (PC = 0.119, T student = 1.225 and p = 0.222) respectively. Another reason which proves that is the value 0 that is included within the limits of the confidence intervals. Nevertheless, we notice a slight difference between the path coefficients, t and p values of the two groups high and low uncertainty avoidance (PC : UAH = 0.119 > LUA = -0.198, t : HUA = 1.225 > LUA = 0.600 and p : HUA = 0.222 < LUA = 0.549). Those for high uncertainty avoidance are closer to the existence of a relationship, which leads us to say that high uncertainty avoidance customers place more importance on service quality dimensions than low uncertainty avoidance customers. However, in our case we conclude that the hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion and implication:

The objective of this study is to investigate the nature of the relationship between perceived service quality and tourists satisfaction in the algerian southern region on one hand, and whether or not uncertainty avoidance as a cultural dimension has any moderating effect on the relationship between service quality and customers satisfaction on the other. We have also tried to study the effect of the two degrees of uncertainty avoidance ‘high and low’ on the service quality dimensions. To achieve this objective, four different hypotheses were proposed.

One of the most important findings of this study supported the hypothesized positive link between perceived services quality and satisfaction as expected and proven in several previous studies (e.g. Mey and al. 2006 ; Al Khattab, 2011 ; Attallah, 2015 ; Landrum and al., 2006 ; Kassim and Abdullah, 2010 ; Karatepe and Avci, 2014), confirming that quality is a key determinant of customer satisfaction. This finding suggests that providing better quality service is critical to induce customer satisfaction, thus, customers service quality should always be the main concern of the tourists operators. We hypothesized and tested the influence of the cultural dimension uncertainty avoidance on the relationship between consumers’ service quality perceptions and customers satisfaction , the result reveals that uncertainty avoidance does not have any significant moderating effect on the relationship between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction. From the statistics, it is clear that both the values of standardised estimate and t-value are weak, and their corresponding p-value is not significant, which does not support the findings of Reimann and al. (2014) who proved in their work that uncertainty avoidance as a cultural variable has a significant moderating influence on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. This finding is not unexpected because in our study we did not use the original hofestede’s scale to measure the cultural dimension « uncertainty avoidance » due to the work-context of the measure items, and those who are not employed might have a hard time relating them to their daily life experiences. In a tourism context where the target

population consists of tourists who may be housewives, students, workers, unemployed or retired people, etc., it was necessary to choose a scale that integrates a non-work context. Consequently, and according to the purpose of our study, the scale developed by Furrer and al., (2000) was used. This measure scale seemed to us to be the least complex and the most accessible to respondents in terms of comprehension, and it is oriented towards the individual's behaviour in society. Nonetheless, Yoo, Donthu and Lenartowicz in their article « Measuring Hofstede's Five Dimensions of Cultural Values at the Individual Level: Development and Validation of CVSCALE » published in 2011, argued that the psychometric properties of Furrer's scale were found to be very weak; the reliability of each dimension ranges from -0.26 to 0.51. This was indeed proven in our study with a Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.48 and a factor loading below 0.4 which led us to delete two items and end up with a two-item scale which is obviously insufficient to test any link between the constructs. Needless to say that these reasons led to negative results for hypothesis tests 2a and 2b, so that high and low uncertainty avoidance customers don't perceive service quality dimensions differently. These results are not different from those of Donthu and Yoo (1998), who found a non significant difference between high and low uncertainty avoidance customers regarding the tangibility dimension of service quality. The negative results obtained are not determinative because many anterior research have proven the influence of both culture and uncertainty avoidance's dimension on the services quality and satisfaction relationship.

Suggestions for future research

Even though there were some limits in this explanatory study, it has high potential value in providing a foundation for future research, because many prior research on perceived service quality reveals an increasing focus on cultural values and their influence on customer satisfaction (e.g. Donthu and Yoo 1998; Furrer, Liu, and Sudharshan 2000; Liu, Furrer, and Sudharshan 2001). There are several opportunities to extend this study ; it can be reproduced with another set of items for the cultural variable as many authors have tried to develop measurement scales that can be applied to different services industries at the individual level, for example Yoo, Donthu and Lenartowicz's (2011) scale. Moreover, studying the influence of the cultural dimension "uncertainty avoidance" on the tourist services quality at the national level with a sample group composed of African or North African tourists and European tourists would be advantageous, as few studies have dealt with this subject. Reimann and al. (2014) measured the effect of uncertainty avoidance by taking into consideration the concept of tolerance zone, more precisely they measured the impact of the cultural dimension in defective situations, this focus would be favorable to carry to in futur research in order to understand how to prevent a service defect when the customer encounters a situation or behavior that does not conform to his or her cultural background. On the other hand, it would be interesting not to dissociate the uncertainty avoidance dimension from cultural construct but rather to study the effect of all cultural dimensions on the relationship between perceived service quality and overall tourist satisfaction. Additionnaly, further research on service quality and satisfaction measurement in a cultural context can focus on contingency variables and all the possible relationships between the five cultural dimensions and the five services quality dimensions as studied by Furrer and al., (2000).

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