Applying Quality Management Tools to Improve Customer Journey at Beauty Salon

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Abstract

         Purpose: This paper focuses on assessing and improving the quality of services provided at Beauty Salon in Saudi Arabia. The evaluation covers the entire customer journey, starting from reservation and visiting, through to payment and finally, providing services. Design, Methodology, Approach: A mixed-method approach was utilized, combining qualitative data from interviews with clients and salon staff, and quantitative data collected through customer satisfaction surveys. Quality Management Tools were applied to analyze the collected data, identify gaps in service delivery, and propose a structured improvement plan tailored to customer expectations. Findings: Service-related issues were categorized into eight main dimensions: facilities, appointment scheduling, price and value, staff professionalism, responsiveness, human resources, cleanliness and services. The House of Quality was used to prioritize the top 22 solutions, with relative weights ranging from 2% to 8%. The integration of the voice of the customer and the voice of the staff provided a holistic view of current challenges and improvement opportunities. Originality/Value: This study contributes to the limited literature on applying Quality Management Tools in the beauty and personal care sector in Saudi Arabia. By integrating SERVQUAL dimensions with quality tools, it offers practical guidelines for

salon businesses to enhance service delivery and customer satisfaction. It demonstrates how a customer-centric approach can elevate the competitive positioning of salons in the local market through targeted quality interventions.

Keywords: SERVQUAL, Customer satisfaction, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

The beauty sector is one of the most significant and profitable industries in Saudi Arabia, offering vast opportunities for growth and development. It is undergoing swift growth.

The empowerment of Saudi women, shifting lifestyles, global trends, and the rise of social media, along with increased workforce participation, are key drivers of the industry's rapid growth. As a result, major Saudi cities have seen a significant increase in women's beauty salons. This thriving industry is also expected to continue attracting more investors and entrepreneurs.

As reported by Statista (2024), the beauty and personal care market in Saudi Arabia is projected to see steady growth from 2025 to 2030, with total revenue expected to rise by $1.1 billion USD, a 17.68% increase. By 2030, this growth would mark the tenth consecutive year of expansion, reaching a record high of $7.36 billion USD. This trend continues a pattern of consistent revenue increases in recent years.

According to (Munsha'at report) these salons offer a wide range of services, including facial care, hair care, nail treatments, and more. Various societal, cultural, and tourism-related factors that have shaped Saudi Arabia in recent years have contributed to the growing demand for beauty salon services, particularly for women.

The quality of services in beauty salons is closely tied to customer satisfaction, especially in environments that emphasize personalized service. In such settings, customers tend to carefully assess the salon atmosphere, as it plays a vital role in shaping interactions between clients and employees (Kampani & Jhamb, 2020).

From the perspective of the beauty industry, many studies have focused on assessing the quality of services provided in salon environments. For example study by Tjandra & Suhartono (2023) The study used the SERVQUAL method, which measures five key dimensions of service quality, to identify gaps between customer expectations and their actual experiences in salon services. The results revealed notable discrepancies, especially in areas such as comfort, cleanliness, responsiveness, and consistency, indicating a clear need for targeted improvements in these aspects. Another study by Sultana & Islam

(2016) aimed to evaluate customer satisfaction in beauty parlors in Chittagong using the SERVQUAL model, and found that tangibility had the highest impact on customer satisfaction, indicating that visible and physical aspects of service are key drivers of client perception.

In this context, the SERVQUAL model serves as an effective tool for assessing service quality, consisting of five specific, measurable dimensions that help evaluate the functional aspects of service delivery; the five dimensions of service quality are reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance. Reliability refers to employees' ability and dedication to delivering services as promised (Balinado et al., 2021). Responsiveness, as a dimension of service quality, reflects a company's ability to offer well-structured and diverse programs, minimize customer waiting time, deliver prompt service, and provide accurate, comprehensive information. Assurance encompasses elements such as competence, courtesy, and reliability. A company demonstrates strong assurance when it ensures customer security, protects the confidentiality of customer data, and delivers services professionally. Empathy involves building strong customer relationships through effective communication, accessibility, and a clear understanding of customer needs (Setiono & Hidayat, 2022)

Satisfaction refers to the emotional response, either positive or negative that arises when a product's perceived performance is compared to expectations. If the performance falls short, the customer feels dissatisfied, while meeting expectations leads to satisfaction or contentment (Baquero, 2022).

With the company aiming for expansion, this project focuses on deepening the understanding of customer needs and expectations by engaging with their feedback before initiating large-scale growth. It also assesses and seeks to enhance the customer journey from the point of entry to the fulfillment of their requirements. To gather customer insights and ensure satisfaction, the project employed a mixed-method approach, conducting focus group interviews for qualitative data and distributing surveys for quantitative data. The findings were then analyzed using Quality Management Tools to create an action plan and provide recommendations aimed at improving both the customer experience and overall satisfaction.

Methods
Focus Group

A focus group was conducted involving three customers and three organization representatives. The discussion lasted approximately 60 minutes and centered on understanding customer expectations regarding salon services, which are key to achieving customer satisfaction. The conversation specifically focused on areas such as promotions, human resources, service

quality, the products used within the salon, and the facilities available inside the store.

Survey
Designing the survey

The customer questionnaire was developed based on data gathered from the focus group discussions, as well as the SERVQUAL dimensions introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988). A five-point Likert scale was applied to all questions, and responses ranged from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). After being translated, the scale was approved and peer-reviewed by both scholars and others who work in the industry for both its face and content validity. After the team reviewed the questionnaire, it was sent to the project director for more feedback, corrections and final sign-off so it could be used.

Afterward, a pilot study was held to see if the questionnaire was reliable and valid. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate reliability since it is a commonly used method to measure consistency of a questionnaire (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). According to general guidelines for reliability statistics, Cronbach's alpha values should exceed 0.70, as suggested by Hair et al. (2014) and Nunnally (1994).

Regarding the validity of the questionnaire, correlation analysis was employed to assess construct validity, as it involves examining the relationships between variables (MacKenzie, 2012). All questionnaire items were retained, as the results showed satisfactory levels of correlation between each item and its respective construct, indicating that every item made a meaningful contribution to the overall validity of the instrument. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha values across the main dimensions were notably high, particularly for Tangibles (0.935) and Assurance (0.931). These results suggest that the items consistently measured the intended constructs (see Table 1). In addition, the researchers developed a separate questionnaire to capture the perceptions of internal and external customers, ensuring that insights were gathered from both perspectives involved in the service experience.

Table 1: Measuring reliability and validity of the questionnaire

Main Factor	Code	Dimension / Question Area	Cronbach's Alpha	Total Correlation
Tangibles	TA1	The salon's location is convenient and easy to access	0.935	0.453
	TA2	The salon has modern equipment and facilities		0.684
	TA3	The salon provides an easy-to-use booking system (online, phone, or in-person)		0.692
	TA4	There is a comfortable and well-equipped waiting area		0.484
	TA5	The salon has a good and sufficient area for coffee and snacks		0.457

	TA6	There is enough parking space near the salon		0.353
	TA7	In general, the physical facility in the salon is visually appealing		0.598
	TA8	There is internet connection accessible in the salon		0.282
	TA9	The air conditioning works well and provides a comfortable atmosphere		0.682
	TA10	The salon has a pleasant and refreshing fragrance		0.629
	TA11	The lighting in the salon is adequate and comfortable		0.775
	TA12	The salon ensures that all equipment (towels, clippers, combs, etc.) is clean and well-maintained		0.732
	TA13	The salon is always clean, including the care area, hair washing station waiting room, and restrooms		0.731
	TA14	The employees maintain a neat and professional appearance		0.733
	TA15	The treatment rooms are well-equipped and comfortable		0.794
	TA16	The salon uses high-quality products and modern equipment for treatments		0.781
Reliability	RE1	The salon starts my appointment on time	0.909	0.412
	RE2	The waiting time at the salon is reasonable		0.66
	RE3	The services match the descriptions in the menu		0.866
	RE4	Every time I visit the salon, I receive the same quality service, even with the change of specialists		0.692
	RE5	The salon uses high-quality products every time		0.816
	RE6	The salon staff follows my specific requests accurately during the service		0.817
	RE7	The salon keeps accurate records of customer invoices		0.808
Responsiveness	RS1	The salon responds quickly to appointment requests	0.926	0.699
	RS2	It is easy to contact the salon to book or change an appointment		0.639
	RS3	The salon informs me if my service changes, such as a change in appointment time or service type		0.734
	RS4	The salon staff answers my questions quickly		0.758
	RS5	Employees respond quickly to solve any problem		0.785
	RS6	The salon tries to meet special requests when possible		0.74
	RS7	The staff is available to help when I need them		0.718
	RS8	The payment process at the salon is easy and fast		0.678
Assurance	AS1	The staff gives clear information about services and prices	0.931	0.592
	AS2	The employees of salon are trustworthy		0.742
	AS3	The staff's skills and behavior increase my confidence in their service		0.762
	AS4	The staff is polite and respectful toward customers even during high-pressure situations		0.82
	AS5	I feel safe and comfortable at the salon		0.835
	AS6	The staff advise me about the best services according to customer needs		0.853
	AS7	Staff provides the same level of service to all customers, regardless of social status		0.725
	AS8	The salon's ads and promotions on social media		0.802

		accurately reflect the services provided		
Empathy	EM1	The staff understands my needs and provides personalized attention	0.91	0.725
	EM2	The salon prioritizes my needs and best interest		0.677
	EM3	The staff is patient and listens carefully to my concerns		0.741
	EM4	The salon operates at hours convenient to the customer		0.822
Additional Services	AD1	I hope the salon provides home services	0.783	0.666
	AD2	I would like the salon to introduce membership or loyalty programs with special benefits		0.73
	AD3	I wish the salon provided exclusive VIP services for regular customers		0.496
Satisfaction	SA1	The provided services of the salon are excellent and professional	0.915	0.779
	SA2	I consider this salon my first choice		0.525
	SA3	My overall experience with the salon satisfies me		0.739
	SA4	I recommend this salon to people who seek my advice		0.757
	SA5	The price of services is appropriate and suitable for the quality of the service provided		0.583
	SA6	I am completely satisfied with the salon's complaints system		0.837
	SA7	I am completely satisfied with the compensation system in case of damage or dissatisfaction with services		0.821

Distributing the survey

The target population for this study consists of customers seeking beauty salon services. The survey was distributed electronically via an online link, as well as through printed QR codes that were displayed within the salon. A simple random sampling method was employed, ensuring that every customer had an equal chance to participate in the survey (Fleiss et al., 2013). In total, 144 fully completed responses were collected and used for further analysis. In addition, a total of 14 responses were obtained from the employee survey.

Customer journey map

The Customer Journey Map is a technique used to monitor and assess the customer experience, as well as to evaluate the quality of a service or process. It is defined as a time-sequenced, linear depiction of the key stages a customer passes through when engaging with a business or service (Mangiaracina & Brugnoli, 1970). Customer experience is primarily understood as a process that begins at an initial entry point and moves toward an endpoint, shaped by the customer's intentions, motivations, and objectives. Customer Journey Mapping breaks this experience into several distinct stages. By analyzing user behavior, each stage is examined to identify specific goals, intentions, touchpoints, tools, and potential

challenges. Ultimately, the focus extends to the relationships and interactions between the different stages (Mangiaracina & Brugnoli, 1970).

Figure 1 below illustrates the customer experience at the salon, which is structured into five key stages: Reservation, where the customer books an appointment; Visiting, when the customer enters the salon; Service Request, where the customer communicates their preferences for the service; Payment, where the customer settles the bill before receiving the service; and Serving, which represents the actual salon treatment or service provided.

Figure 1. Customer Journey Map. Developed by the authors

Customer Journey Map at Salon						
Stage		Reservation	Visiting	Requesting	Payment	Serving
Responsibility Department	Call Center					
	Customer Service / Reception					
	Operations / Stylists					
	Accounting / Admin					
	Supervision					
Customer feeling		😐	😐	😐	😐	😐
Overall Rating		3.04	3.28	3.25	3.20	3.30
Gap\Opportunities		- No electronic booking system available - slow response from the call center	- Poor waiting area - long waiting time. - No free Wi-Fi -Unclean environment	-Weak communication - Lack of personalized service	- perception of high prices compared to the service value. - No loyalty system -No clear refund policy	-Inconsistent quality -Unequal treatment - Poor response to issues - Staff not always available
Recommended Solutions		- Allow 24/7 booking online or via app - Advanced appointment management system - Train staff in communication	- Upgrade interior design - Send reminders to clients and staff - Send updates via SMS, email, or WhatsApp - Upgrade internet package -Use high-quality sanitizers	-Train staff in efficient communication -Train staff on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity	-introduce value bundles or loyalty discounts to enhance perceived value. - Create a VIP membership program with exclusive perks - Empower frontline staff to give small compensations quickly	- Set clear SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for all services -Check for skill gaps - Reward staff meeting standards - Train staff on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity - Offer raises or bonuses based on performance. - Increase staff during peak hours - Train staff regularly on products and services

Quality management tools
Affinity Diagram

The affinity diagram is a vital tool in quality management and planning, designed to organize dispersed ideas such as those from brainstorming, interviews, or open-ended surveys into coherent, thematic categories (Awasthi & Chauhan, 2012). This structured approach helps uncover patterns, identify key insights, and minimize redundancy. In this study, data gathered from focus groups, interviews, and questionnaire responses were synthesized into eight core categories, as illustrated in Figure 2.
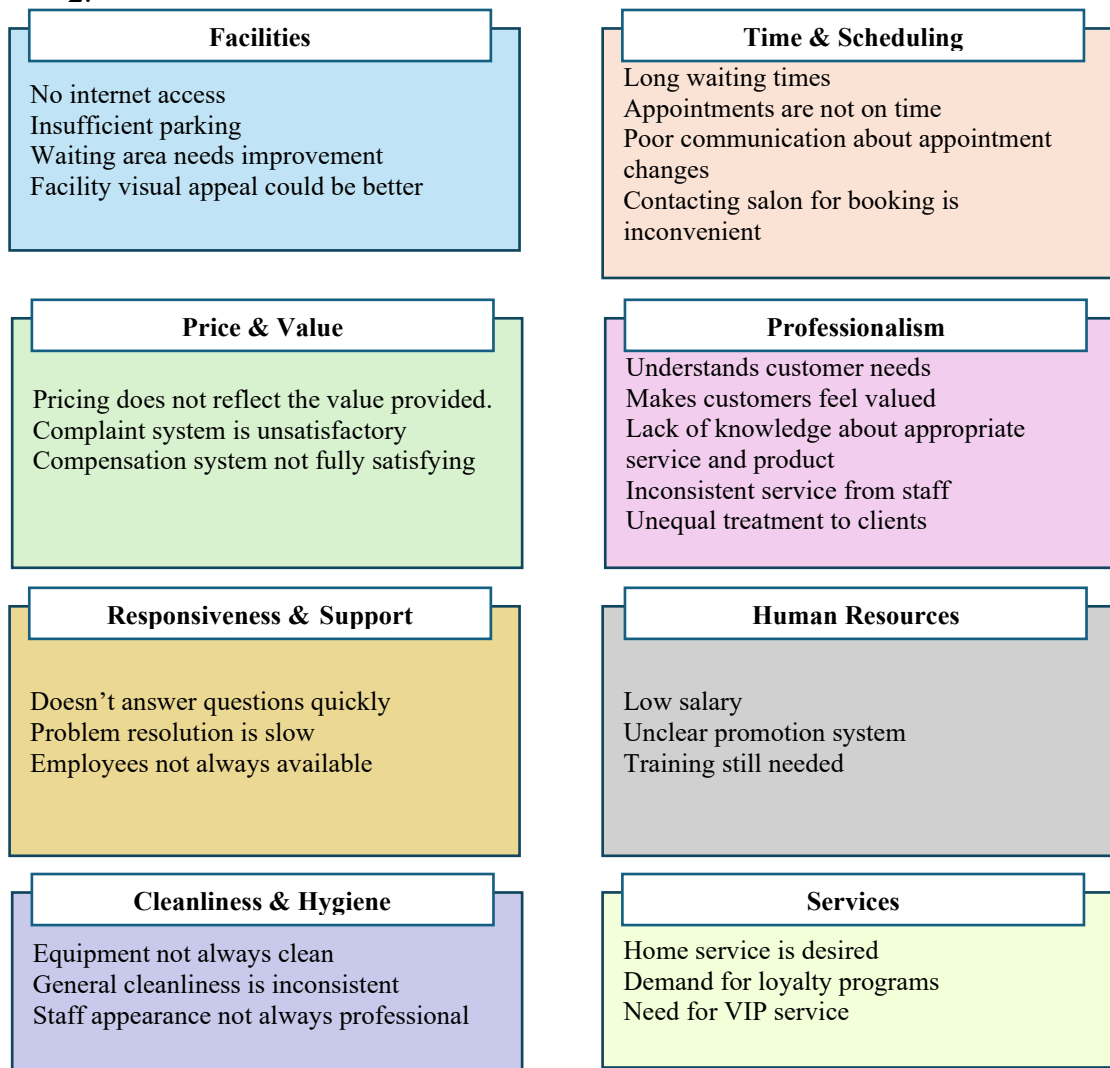
Facilities

No internet access
Insufficient parking
Waiting area needs improvement
Facility visual appeal could be better

Time & Scheduling

Long waiting times
Appointments are not on time
Poor communication about appointment changes
Contacting salon for booking is inconvenient

Price & Value

Pricing does not reflect the value provided.
Complaint system is unsatisfactory
Compensation system not fully satisfying

Professionalism

Understands customer needs
Makes customers feel valued
Lack of knowledge about appropriate service and product
Inconsistent service from staff
Unequal treatment to clients

Responsiveness & Support

Doesn't answer questions quickly
Problem resolution is slow
Employees not always available

Human Resources

Low salary
Unclear promotion system
Training still needed

Cleanliness & Hygiene

Equipment not always clean
General cleanliness is inconsistent
Staff appearance not always professional

Services

Home service is desired
Demand for loyalty programs
Need for VIP service

Figure 2. Affinity Diagram for Quality of Services Issues (Developed by the Authors)

Interrelationship diagram:

The Interrelationship Diagram serves as a critical extension of the affinity diagram by taking the grouped ideas and mapping out the directional cause-and-effect relationships among them. Rather than merely clustering related concepts, this tool enables teams to analyze how individual elements influence or are influenced by others within a complex issue. As Marinescu et al. (2010) emphasize, it is particularly effective in transforming qualitative insights into a structured network of logical connections, helping identify key drivers that contribute to the root causes of a problem. By visualizing these interactions, the diagram supports a more strategic approach to prioritization and decision-making in multifaceted environments. The following relationships were derived based on the logical linkages identified among the grouped elements in this study, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Lack of Human Resources and Lack of Professionalism: Many customers find that the staff is not skilled or professional enough and this affects their customer experience. Poor training and fewer chances for staff development have created problems with staff talking to each other and dealing with customers. Also, not paying employees well and providing unclear paths for advancement decrease motivation, which makes providing the same high level of service a challenge. So, to boost both professionalism and satisfy customers, companies should introduce training and offer improved incentives to their employees.

Lack of Human Resources and Lack of Responsiveness and Support: Many customers are upset because employees are slow to pay attention to their issues and provide suppor,t which makes the service experience worse. It mostly arises because of poor training and low employee motivation. When there are not enough human resources, there are poor payment schemes, confusing options for advancement and insufficient training which make staff care less and perform poorly. In turn, employees might not assist customers in a timely or satisfactory way which makes the customers upset. Hence, providing higher compensation, clear progression paths and extra training to staff ensures they can respond better to customers and do their jobs well.

Lack of Human Resources and Lack of Cleanliness: Customers often find the food places are dirty, with messy equipment, bad hygiene everywhere and insufficient staff to provide proper service. A major part of this issue is the combination of poor wages and unclear promotions which lowers workers' dedication to cleanliness. In addition, because training is lacking, staff do not realize how important sticking to cleaning habits and looking appropriate can be. Thus, customers have a less positive experience, so the company must raise salaries, make career advancement clearer and provide hygiene and appearance training.

Lack of Human Resources and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: Recruiting additional team members, conducting routine training and rewarding people based on how they perform may be a heavy expense for the business. Because of these extra costs, companies usually need to raise their service fees. While these investments aim to boost service quality, some of these improvements are not always clearly seen or understood by everyone right away which could cause customers to think the price is too expensive. As a consequence, more people feel that what they pay for medical services is not reasonable. Companies need to focus on both their employees and customer perceptions of better quality in efficiency, responsiveness and behavior.

Lack of Additional Services and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: When things such as home service, loyalty programs, or special treatment for VIPs are not included, customers feel they are not receiving all they paid for. Pricing something fairly is about the specifics of the offer, but also about how users view the benefits and conveniences included. If there aren't extra incentives or flexible services, the experience feels the same as any other company, no matter how much customers pay. This means that the missing perks diminish the way customers see value and fairness in the pricing and the service appears weaker in comparison to companies that include these extra services.

Lack of Professionalism and Delays and Scheduling Issue: If staff members are careless, it often results in wasting time, poor organization, and mistakes in service delivery. If staff do not have confidence, proper training or attention to detail, it becomes hard to stick to correct appointment times or service the clients as promised. Failure to understand what customers require might cause appointments to take place at inconvenient times and communicate poorly, causing appointments to not be fully taken advantage of and queues to be lengthier. As a result, the trust customers have in you weakens and their dissatisfaction grows because of inefficiency.

Lack of professionalism and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: Customers compare prices with the level of service they experience, such as how good and steady it is. If staff lack training, fail to treat all clients fairly, or make customers feel unappreciated, it can still result in clients judging the value of the service to be lower, as long as the cost is reasonable. If companies do not notice or satisfy customer needs well enough, their service is insufficient and this may persuade customers that the price is not worth it, making them doubt if the service is fair.

Lack of Professionalism and Lack of Responsiveness and Support: When staff do not feel confident, knowledgeable or responsible, there are more challenges in communication and response times get longer. Because of this, customers have to wait longer for assistance, their questions remain

unanswered and support is not very effective. Professionalism includes listening, feeling empathy and acting right away. When team members fail to do this, customers feel ignored, frustrated and receive little support during interactions.

Lack of Responsiveness and Support and Delays and Scheduling Issues: If customer inquiries and booking requests are handled slowly, there will be delays in scheduling. When there are not enough team members and responses are slow, confirming appointments, rescheduling times and dealing with problems often gets disrupted. Therefore, schedules can become disordered, people need to wait longer and they miss valuable chances for being on time. This means responsiveness failures lead to delays in tasks and make service delivery last longer which decreases customer trust and satisfaction.

Lack of Responsiveness and Support and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: Value is linked to the main service and all aspects of the customer experience, including how quickly their concerns get sorted out. When problems continue and clients' questions go unheard, they feel neglected and have reduced respect. It lowers people's trust in fairness, as they feel they need to cover both the service and what they think should be included— support and responsiveness. If companies do not deliver what they offer, people might feel there is no reason for their prices which can lower customer loyalty.

Lack of Facilities and Delays and Scheduling Issues: Lack of enough parking, slow or no internet and uneasy places to wait can lead to problems with the way services are run. If customers can't get parking or get stuck on the booking process, this will cause service delays. If waiting areas are not large enough, it can cause confusion and make it hard to handle customer traffic. Because of these environmental constraints, tasks take more time which causes both delays in appointments and longer waiting periods for the clients.

Lack of Facilities and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: The environment in which a service is offered adds to the way people judge its value. If the customer finds the location lacking such as with no internet, unappealing design or uncomfortable seats, they may feel that paying more is not worth it. If someone is travelling and notices that many amenities are missing, the quality of the service does not feel as good as the price they paid and the customer sees the costs as unfair.

Lack of Cleanliness and Lack of Fair Pricing and Value: Cleanliness is a fundamental component of perceived service quality. When customers encounter dirty equipment, unclean environments, or poorly groomed staff, they instinctively question the value of what they are paying for. No matter how skilled the service may be, a lack of cleanliness creates a sense that

standards are low, which weakens the customer's sense of fairness and satisfaction with the pricing. Customers expect hygiene to be a given its absence makes any price feel unjustified and the experience feel unworthy of the cost.

Lack of Cleanliness and Lack of Professionalism: A clean, well-maintained environment and professional staff appearance are essential indicators of organizational professionalism. When these are lacking, it signals carelessness, poor management, or lack of employee training. Customers interpret untidy spaces or unkempt employees as signs that the business does not take pride in its work or respect its clientele. Cleanliness directly reflects how seriously a company approaches service delivery, and its absence undermines the professional image of the brand.
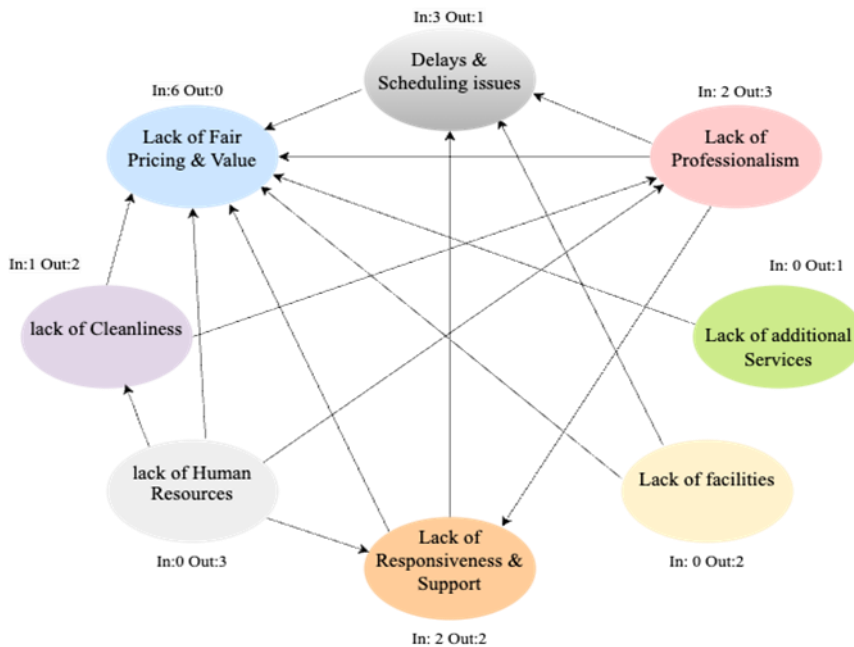

Figure 3. Interrelationship Diagram (Developed by Authors)

Tree diagram

This approach is considered one of the most effective ways to plan tasks or solve problems. It organizes events in a branching structure that clearly maps out the necessary steps to reach a goal or deeply analyze the root causes of an issue. It's especially useful when the core problem is known, but no solution strategy exists yet, or when a task initially seems simple but becomes difficult to execute. Especially if serious consequences can happen, it is useful to use this method for reviewing various approaches, guiding complicated steps, finding interdependencies and pinpointing ways to improve the process (Al Thnayan et al., 2001). As the next step, a tree

diagram was built to further investigate and break down the reasons detected by the customer feedback collected through focus groups, surveys and an affinity diagram.

Process Decision Program Chart (PDPC)

The Process Decision Program Chart (PDPC) serves as a planning tool in modern management to spot possible failures before they occur in the plan. Risks are addressed by finding solutions that can either stop them or reduce their effect. At the PDPC, participants make sure the plan is updated to avoid difficulties and plan the best ways to handle them if they should happen (Amartya & Mahbubah, 2022). The goal is to explain that focusing on prevention usually helps more than resolving problems when they crop up. PDPC is used mainly to outline each step in completing a process and to deeply analyze it (Gooding, 2018). Its primary goal is to conduct a detailed investigation into the process and identify areas where failures might happen.

In this research, 28 primary causes were derived from eight key issues identified through the tree diagram. The PDPC diagram incorporated 20 of these primary causes, each linked to one of the eight main issues. Subsequently, the team generated multiple solutions addressing these causes and assessed the potential risks associated with their implementation. Following the risk assessment, alternative solutions were proposed to mitigate these risks. In total, the team proposed 32 solutions, 33 identified risks, and 33 corresponding alternative solutions.

Matrix diagram

The matrix serves as a core component among the seven management tools, primarily aiming to illustrate the connections between outcomes and causes or goals and methods, while also assessing their relative importance and the direction of their influence through coded indicators (Tsironis, 2018). Additionally, the diagram assists in identifying potential causes behind particular results. It is particularly useful when dealing with two separate groups of factors or methods that might not initially seem connected, or when a cumulative numerical evaluation is necessary to compare two items. Factors are systematically organized into a chart with rows and columns, and the intersections highlight the relationship and its intensity, forming the groundwork for decision-making and problem-solving (Pramono et al., 2018). Data represented within the matrix is utilized in matrix data analysis to structure and quantify information clearly.

In this context, the relationships between customer requirements and alternative quality attributes are categorized into three levels: strong, moderate, and weak. The paper evaluated the solutions derived from the PDPC to analyze the link between causes and solutions. A strong

relationship is marked with the symbol (●) and assigned a value of 9, a moderate relationship is indicated by (○) with a value of 3, and a weak relationship by (▽) with a value of 1, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Matrix Diagram Symbol Value

Symbol	●	○	▼	
Value	9	3	1	
Relationship	Strong	Medium	Weak	No relationship

Prioritization Matrix

The tool called the Prioritization Matrix lets you organize and decide which actions to take by systematically evaluating them. Sorting the tasks by how they fit with operational and improvement factors gives a quick and straightforward way to find which tasks should be dealt with first (Shahin et al, 2010). After drawing up a matrix to monitor the pairings of causes and solutions, this research used a prioritization matrix to arrange the solutions by how important they were.

It is commonly accepted that this framework helps organizations sort issues in order to resolve the most serious ones initially. It is useful no matter how big or small a project is which is why individuals and organizations use it. When added to established criteria, some call it a Criterion or Priority Matrix which allows teams to measure options by looking at their strategic importance, what they could bring in terms of value and chances of success (Alshahrani et al, 2023). Usually, in a matrix structure, each technical requirement or strategy is written vertically and given a score and rank indicating its significance. This way, the scores help set priorities by ranking the tasks from most to least urgent and the overall score provides an easy way to find the most urgent tasks for each team or department. Action strategies that were given priority were given to the proper departments based on the action plan.

To further validate the prioritization results and assess the salon's competitive position, a weighted gap analysis was conducted. This analysis compares the performance of the studied salon against two local competitors across key service factors. The purpose is to identify relative weaknesses and opportunities for improvement that align with customer expectations.

Quality Function Deployment

Quality Function Deployment (QFD) is one of the tools used in Total Quality Management (TQM) to help meet and fulfill customer needs and expectations. QFD is a process that helps find out customer expectations and weaves them into the production of new products (Karanjekar et al., 2021). Researchers collect what customers require by doing surveys, watching them interact or analyzing field data. After collecting data, it is arranged in a

product planning matrix that allows translating what customers are looking for (Muslimin et al, 2023).

A main benefit of QFD in improving quality is that it helps to change customer needs into specific requirements for products and services (Park, 2021). Here, the researchers found the House of Quality (HOQ) to be the most significant part of QFD. At the beginning, voice of the customer was organized into eight domains obtained from the Affinity Diagram, making a few adaptations to add facilities, human resources, services, pricing, professionalism, scheduling, responsiveness and cleanliness. Under each category, a total of 26 requirements were identified based on customer feedback.

Each of these requirements was rated on a scale from 1 to 5 to determine its relative importance. Furthermore, technical requirements were obtained from the PDPC, which initially yielded 65 proposed solutions. These were subsequently narrowed down to 22 requirements based on scoring results. The relationship dimension between customer needs and technical requirements was brought in from the prioritization matrix tool. Each technical requirement was assigned a score; the highest score, 352, was attributed to Increase staff during peak hours, while the lowest score 114, corresponded to keep cleaning supplies accessible.

A competitive analysis was also conducted, involving the company under the study and two competitors operating within the same customer segment. Services were evaluated based on customer requirements prior to the implementation of proposed improvements, using a scale from 0 to 5. The roof of the HOQ diagram was used to determine whether technical requirements positively (+) or negatively (−) influence one another in the implementation process. In conclusion, the HOQ tool enabled the strategic application of management tools to design optimal solutions that align with customer needs and requirements while enhancing competitiveness within the market (Figure 4).
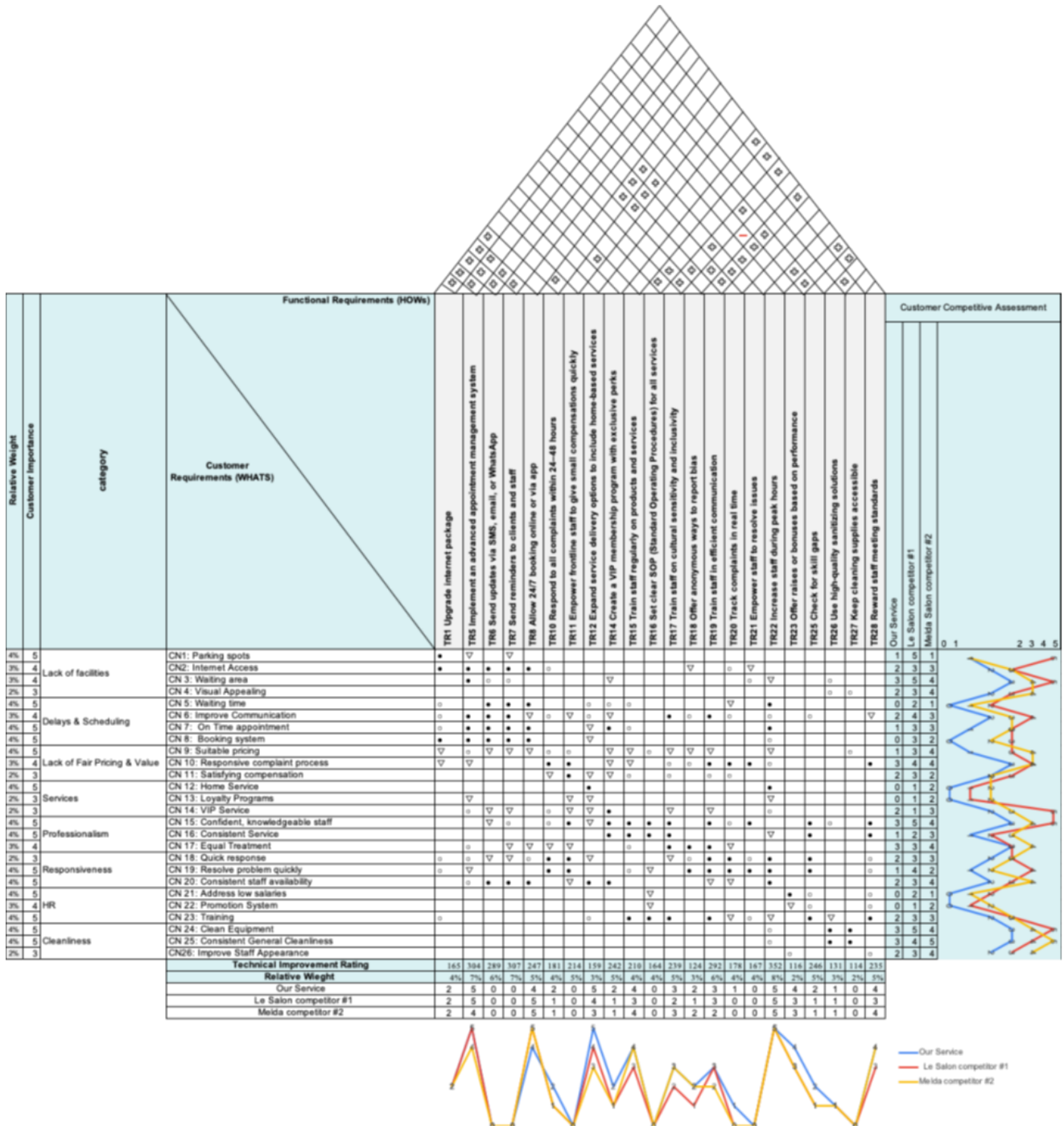
Figure 4. The House of Quality (HOQ)

Areas of Improvement
Time and scheduling

One important area for improvement at the Beauty Salon is the management of time and appointment scheduling. Clients have frequently reported issues such as delays, extended waiting times, and inconsistent appointment handling. These concerns often lead to dissatisfaction and impact the overall client experience. Additionally, the current booking system is not always convenient or accessible, making it difficult for clients to manage or reschedule their appointments easily. Effective time management and improved communication are essential to enhance operational flow, build trust, and ensure a more professional and pleasant experience for every customer. Therefore, the following recommendations have been made:

- o Implement an advanced appointment management system to ensure efficient scheduling and reduce waiting times.
- o Offer express beauty services for clients who are short on time.
- o Send automated appointment reminders and updates via SMS, WhatsApp, or email to both clients and staff.
- o Assign a dedicated staff member such as a front desk coordinator to manage the daily schedule and follow up on delays or changes.
- o Enable 24/7 online booking through a mobile-friendly website or app.
- o Use chatbots or simple booking forms to allow quick appointment requests via social media or website.
- o Include booking links on Salon's Instagram, Snapchat, and other social channels.
- o Allow clients to view, confirm, or reschedule appointments online with ease.

Value and responsiveness:

The business is dealing with major issues with its services at the moment which is affecting how customers feel. Many customers find that they receive responses late which makes them think the business is not concerned about their questions. The process for problem resolution is also slow or confusing, as there is usually no regular sharing of updates which leaves customers feeling lost.

Also, when people are away from their job such as during evenings or other peak periods, this makes it hard for customers to resolve their issues since employees might not be trained to handle different job functions at the same time. In addition, the compensation system is unclear and unfair when things go wrong. Not everyone knows their rights and employees at this level are usually unable to speedily settle small complaints, making the situation

worse for everyone. As a result, customers trust the company less, are less loyal and opinion about its quality services is lower.

- o Implement a structured and proactive communication system to ensure timely, clear, and helpful customer responses.
- o Train staff in communication best practices and use digital tools to automate and streamline responses.
- o Establish a formal, accessible complaint system with defined processes for tracking and resolving issues.
- o Introduce real-time tracking and escalation mechanisms to address recurring problems effectively.
- o Optimize staff scheduling and availability, especially during peak times, to reduce wait times and ensure service consistency.
- o Cross-train employees and explore remote support options to maintain high service standards.
- o Develop a fair, transparent compensation policy for service issues, including clear rules for refunds, redos, or discounts.
- o Empower staff to offer immediate, minor compensations and clearly communicate these policies to build customer trust.

Staff issues

As a result of the interview and focus group, it becomes clear that the salon is having issues with its Human Resources (HR) systems due to salaries that do not match industry standards, unclear ways for employees to advance and limited training available. Such problems lead to lower staff engagement and job satisfaction, block career advancement and result in a lot of staff leaving the organization.

- o Enhance compensation and benefits to align with employee needs and market standards.
- o Introduce a transparent and attractive rewards system to support motivation and retention.
- o Establish a clear and fair promotion process to guide career growth and boost employee engagement.
- o Develop a structured career development plan to support long-term ambition and retention.
- o Strengthen the training framework to address real skill gaps and future organizational needs.
- o Provide engaging, relevant learning opportunities to improve performance and adaptability.

VIP services and loyalty programs

The Beauty Salon does not have any subscriptions, memberships, or loyalty programmes. Customers are however, expected to receive this

service. Frequent clients have expressed, through questionnaires and focus group discussions, their expectation that such services should be offered. The following recommendations are proposed to enhance the service:

- o Launch a points-based loyalty program with tiered rewards (Bronze, Silver, Gold) based on visit frequency.
- o Offer perks like birthday discounts and referral bonuses.
- o Create a VIP membership program that includes personal consultations, exclusive product access, priority booking, and a direct line to preferred stylists.
- o Promote these benefits via email, SMS, or app notifications, keeping clients engaged and informed.

Action plan:

Table 3: Action plan

Priority	Action Plan	Difficulty	Start Date	Due Date	Responsible Department	Support Needed	Challenges
1	Increase staff during peak hours	Normal	01/08	31/08	HR / Operations	Human / Financial	Financial cost / Human availability
1	Send reminders to clients and staff	Easy	01/08	16/08	IT / Customer service	IT / Human	Technical / Customer's reaction
1	Implement an advanced appointment management system	Hard	03/09	03/10	IT	IT / Financial	Technical / Financial cost
1	Train staff in efficient communication	Normal	04/09	10/09	HR	Human / Official arrangement	Lack of commitment
1	Send updates via SMS, email, or WhatsApp	Easy	05/08	19/8	IT / Customer service	IT / Human	Customer's reaction
1	Allow 24/7 booking online or via app	Hard	08/09	07/12	IT / Customer service	IT / Financial	Technical / Customer adoption
1	Check for skill gaps	Normal	09/06	08/10	HR	Managers/ Supervisor	Lack of commitment
2	Create a VIP membership program with exclusive perks	Hard	10/08	24/11	Marketing / Sales	Financial / Marketing	Customer's reaction / Financial cost
2	Train staff on cultural sensitivity and inclusivity	Normal	10/10	10/11	HR	Human / Official arrangement	Lack of commitment / Cultural challenges

2	Reward staff meeting standards	Easy	12/12	30/12	HR / Management	Financial / Human	Financial cost / Fairness
2	Empower frontline staff to give small compensations quickly	Normal	13/06	12/07	Management / Customer service	Human / Financial	Misuse risk
2	Train staff regularly on products and services	Normal	14/08	13/10	HR	Human / Official arrangement	Turnover / Time constraints
2	Respond to all complaints within 24–48 hours	Normal	15/08	14/09	Customer service	Human	Technical /High complaint volume
2	Track complaints in real time	Hard	16/08	30/08	Customer service	Human	Peak time
2	Empower staff to resolve issues	Normal	17/08	16/09	Management /Customer service	Human / Official arrangement	Lack of commitment / Misuse risk
3	Upgrade internet package	Easy	18/09	17/11	IT	Financial / Technical	Technical / Financial cost
3	Set clear SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for all services	Normal	19/03	02/05	Management / HR	Official arrangement	Lack of commitment/ Flexibility and Innovation
3	Expand service delivery options to include home-based services	Hard	20/06	19/12	Management / Marketing	Financial / Human	Logistical complexity / Quality control issues
3	Use high-quality sanitizing solutions	Easy	21/08	21/08	Operations / Procurement	Financial	Financial cost / Product availability
3	Offer anonymous ways to report bias	Normal	22/08	05/11	HR	Human / Official arrangement	Lack of trust in anonymity
3	Offer raises or bonuses based on performance	Normal	01/12	30/12	HR / Management	Financial / Human	Financial cost / Fairness
3	Keep cleaning supplies accessible	Easy	01/08	31/08	Management	Logistics / Human	Overuse of supplies

Recommendations and conclusion

In assessing the service quality of beauty salon Services, this study adopts the ServQual framework introduced by Parasuraman et al. (1988), recognized as a valuable tool for analyzing various dimensions of customer service performance. To gain a clear understanding of the salon services, customer expectations, needs, and areas for improvement, this study employed a combination of data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and the distribution of questionnaires. The seven quality management tools used on the collected data were the Affinity Diagram, Tree Diagram, Process Decision Program Chart (PDPC), Matrix Diagram, Interrelationship Digraph, Prioritization Matrix and Quality Function Deployment (QFD). A tool called the Affinity Diagram was applied to group the survey findings into eight important categories of service quality issues. The Interrelationship Diagram was used to reveal how many different factors connect and influence problem-solving in a salon business. The group made a Tree Diagram to find out what caused the issues and recommended ways to address them. The next step was to use the (PDPC) to discover any problems that could prevent the proper implementation of these measures. The Matrix Diagram visualized the relationships between the eight identified problems using the data found. Once the reviews were conducted, the next step was to develop the prioritization matrix to arrange the solutions by how important and useful they were. In the end, Quality Function Deployment (QFD) was employed to note what customers expect and change it into specific requirements. The House of Quality highlighted the 16 most significant solutions, which became a useful guide for making service quality adjustments according to what customers require.

They help organizations improve service quality, which increases performance, satisfies customers more and raises profits. Given the findings of the investigation, these suggestions are made to improve company performance.

Primarily, in the salon and beauty service business, where taking care of clients is important, things begin by providing an excellent customer experience. Apart from haircuts and treatments, salons should consider all the details of the customer journey, beginning with booking and ending with them leaving. Reaching reception with a smile, not keeping them waiting long and paying attention throughout the stay impacts their view of the hotel. When a visit is smooth and personalized, it helps clients remain loyal, talk about the salon with others and makes the business different from others.

Furthermore, ensuring both consistency and quality at all stages of the customer experience is very important. If staff act professionally and products are always well-made and clean, communication stays clear, and

customers trust the business more. Customers are much more likely to come back if the service is reliable and high standards are kept, regardless of who provides the service or the time of day.

Moreover, the people working at the salon are the salon's greatest resource. Ensuring staff are well trained, promoting professionalism and having a supportive work culture support better service and makes the customer experience better. If everyone on the team feels inspired and involved, they tend to make clients feel valued and turn to them in the future.

Finally, being able to alter one's approach is necessary as the beauty industry changes all the time. Monitoring how customers' expectations and trends shift, online arranging of appointments or needed services keeps salons in step with the market. Small, innovative improvements to things like reviews or the check-out experience help customers enjoy a better experience and remember the brand positively.

The outcomes and advice above can be used in different sectors, not only the beauty salon industry. Understanding the customers' needs and what they desire should be your first step, because quality is mainly about serving their needs and expectations.

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