The Influence of Services Quality Dimensions on Customer Satisfaction in the Court of Appeal of Tanzania

Evetha Mboya[1] , Jani Dev[2] and Theresia Dominic[3]

Abstract

This study examines the influence of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within the Court of Appeal of Tanzania. Employing the SERVQUAL model, the research assessed the influence of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, on customer satisfaction. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), was utilized to analyze data gathered from 265 court advocates. The findings reveal that tangibles, reliability, assurance and empathy significantly predict customer satisfaction but responsiveness does not. Additionally, the study identifies opportunities for enhancing customer service within the Court of Appeal based on SERVQUAL model elements. The study concludes that enhanced quality dimensions may boost customer satisfaction in the Tanzanian Court of Appeal. Furthermore, investing in training and seminars to empower court staff could significantly improve service provision and ultimately impact customer satisfaction positively.

Keywords: Services Quality Dimensions, Customer Satisfaction, Court of Appeal.

Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable surge in customers' expectations regarding the quality of governments' public services (Aladwan & Alshami, 2021) Satisfactory services are anticipated to be delivered with integrity, prioritizing citizens' needs, ensuring effectiveness, transparency and accessibility to all (Moura e Sa et al., 2021) Such satisfaction embodies an individual's feelings towards the services received, relative to the expectations held prior to interaction (Yeo et al., 2015). Various guidelines, both national, regional and international, have been established to safeguard the interests of the public with regard to the quality of services and the citizens' satisfaction. One among them is the European Union Declaration on Quality of Public Administration Toolbox for Practitioners, serving as a reference point for both European Commission (EC) policies and international practices (Moura e Sa et al., 2021). The European Commission (EC), highlights the significance of services quality and efficiency within governmental bodies (Balinado et al., 2021). These principles line up closely with those defined in various EC directives and international agendas, such as The Vision and African Aspirations for 2063 in the African Agenda 2063, the Europe 2020 Strategy, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development providing access to justice to all while creating effectiveness, accountability and inclusive institutions at all stages (Zygiaris et al., 2022). However, while efforts have been focused on enhancing public sector services, yet, the judicial systems have received relatively less attention, leading to minimal studies assessing the quality of court services, spanning from lower courts to the Court of Appeal.

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[1] University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Tanzania
Email: mboyaeveta@gmail.com
[2] University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Tanzania.
[3] University of Dar es Salaam Business School, Tanzania.

Courts save individuals who may appear occasionally as their cases arise, compared to advocates who are widely familiarized and experienced with the judicial systems (Omar et al., 2016; Sandefur, 2020) Tanzania's judicial system follows a structured progression, from Primary Court to the Court of Appeal (Masabo & Wanitzek, 2015). Starting at the lower level, minor disputes are addressed, with District and Magistrate Courts handling broader civil and criminal matters, followed by Higher Courts for deeper legal issues (Rawheath, 2023). The Court of Appeal represents the final stage of appeals, concluding the petition process within Tanzania's legal framework (Nkombe, 2022). If customers are dissatisfied with petitions filing service in lower courts, the reliability of the Court of Appeal, where no further petitions can be filed, becomes questionable.

Since the Court of Appeal stands as the last resort in Tanzania's petition process, the provision of quality services that would create customer satisfaction is of paramount significance (Tanzania, 1977). As a result, the Court of Appeal for those navigating legal disputes and seeking justice (Windridge, 2015) equitable administration and keeping principles of fairness are crucial aspects of customer satisfaction (Makunya, 2021). On the flip side, the national justice system's failure to deliver its function well threatens its credibility and public faith (Makunya, 2021; Windridge, 2015). In Tanzania, service quality in the judiciary system is of paramount importance thus, the government must ensure that the quality of services provided by the Court of Appeal meets individuals' expectations. The SERVQUAL model, widely used across various service industries such as health management, telecommunications, hospitality and banking, consists of five key measures: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Balinado et al., 2021). These dimensions may serve as fundamental benchmarks in assessing the quality of services delivered by the Tanzanian Court of Appeal. Prior studies have widely assessed service quality, giving considerable efforts on the adequacy of the indicators to evaluate services offered by public entities (Akdere et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2020). Despite that, scarce research has been conducted on Tanzania's judiciary system.

Farooq et al. (2018) assessed customer satisfaction in Malaysia Airlines based on SERVQUAL model approach. In Nigeria also, Umoke et al. (2020) assessed patients' satisfaction with caring quality at general hospitals in the state of Ebony. Finally, Baidoo and Odum-Awuakye (2017) from Cape Coast in Ghana assessed customer satisfaction levels in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) automobile vehicle maintenance and repairs services delivery system. Despite the abundance of SERVQUAL studies conducted worldwide, the evaluation of service quality and customer satisfaction within the Court of Appeal in Tanzania remains underexplored. Therefore, the current study aims to examine service quality in the Court of Appeal in Tanzania using the SERVQUAL model specifically assessed the influence of dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles on customer satisfaction of the Court of Appeal. Reliability examines the court's ability to deliver consistent and accurate services, while responsiveness highlights the promptness and willingness of staff to assist users. Assurance focuses on the competence and professionalism of court personnel, and empathy reflects the institution's ability to address individual user needs with care. Tangibles, which include physical facilities, equipment, and staff appearance.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Formulation

In the services sector, researchers have widely applied the SERVQUAL model to scrutinize customer satisfaction in various contexts ((Akdere et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2020). Sectors such as financial services, tourism and hospitality, transportation and logistics, entertainment and media, and healthcare, are frequently scrutinized for service quality and customer satisfaction, mainly through the lens of the SERVQUAL model (Akdere et al., 2020; Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022; Umoke et al., 2020). However, its application on the issues related to service quality in the judiciary systems has been comparatively restricted. The SERVQUAL model is well-suited for this study, for it is a widely accepted framework for predicting customer satisfaction in various sectors. Within this context, it aids in predicting the satisfaction levels of advocates at the Court of Appeal based on the services offered by the court.

In their study, Balinado et al. (2021), emphasize the importance of the five components of the SERVQUAL model; Tangibles (TAN), Reliability (REL), Responsiveness (RES), Assurance (ASS) and Empathy (EMP), in assessing service quality. Within the court environment, tangibles cover physical facilities like signboards, physical files, waiting areas, equipment, and the appearance of personnel, all of which influence the overall perception of legal service quality (Horodecka & Odlanicka-Poczobutt, 2019).Essential reliability refers to the court system's consistent ability to provide accurate, timely services, ensuring that cases are managed efficiently and outcomes are predictable for all parties involved. Responsiveness highlights the court's readiness to assist litigants promptly, addressing inquiries and requests for information or support in a timely manner. Meanwhile, assurance relates to the court's capacity to inspire trust and confidence among litigants by demonstrating professionalism and competence in legal matters, ensuring fairness throughout the processes Finally, empathy reflects the court's commitment to providing personalized attention, ensuring that psychological needs of individuals involved in legal proceedings are acknowledged and addressed(Kebede Desta, 2019). These components, illustrated in Figure 1, create a framework that was used to evaluate the quality of services offered by the Court of Appeal in Tanzania from the advocates' perspectives. By examining these dimensions, the study sheds light on how they shape perceptions of service quality within the legal system, enhancing understanding of the interactions between service providers and their clientele in the legal profession.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
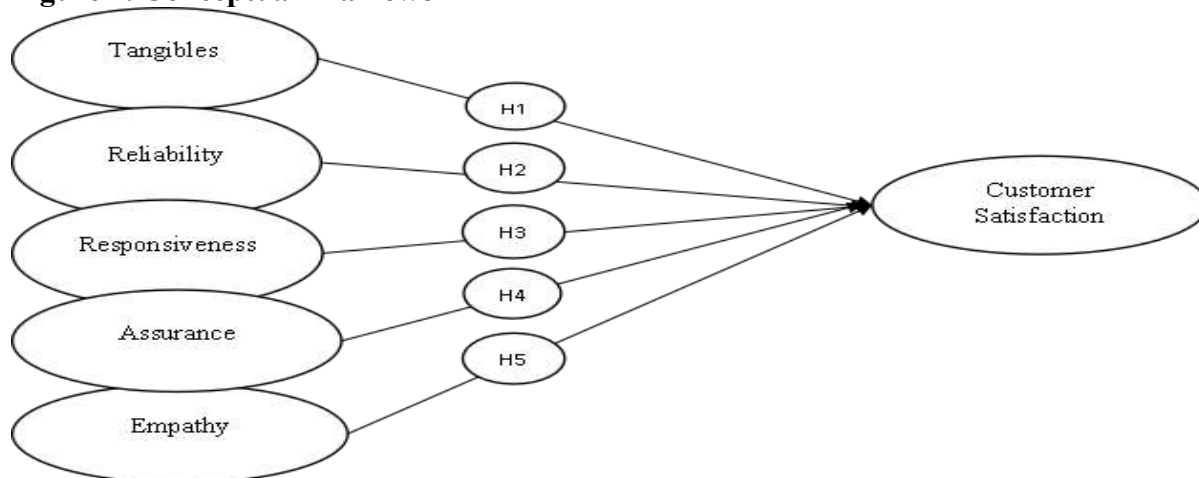
Tangibles and Customer Satisfaction

The tangible dimension, which is the first component of the SERVQUAL model, refers to the physical attributes of service facilities, including the appearance of court equipment, furnishings and the overall court environment in which services are delivered (Kebede Desta, 2019). This includes the visual appeal of structures, including building design and room layout, as well as practical considerations such as parking availability for advocates' vehicles, which reduces inconveniences and facilitates timely attendance at court hearings. Additionally, it covers factors such as environmental cleanliness, the comfort of dispute rooms, the adequacy of communication equipment, and the professional appearance of court personnel (Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022). Such cleanness and well-maintained court environments reflect professionalism and attention to detail. Also, the availability of comfortable seating and amenities in courtrooms and waiting areas, enhances the overall experience and satisfaction for advocates and their clients (Masabo & Wanitzek, 2015). Nevertheless, adequate access to communication tools such as telephones, internet and video conferencing facilities to facilitate effective communication and case management (Windridge, 2015). Professional dresses and manner of court staff, judges and records management assistants, contribute to a respectful and efficient atmosphere within the court and thus enhancing advocates' satisfaction with the Court of Appeal (Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022). Addressing these tangible aspects, it can boost advocates' satisfaction, leading to smoother legal proceedings and improved perceptions of the judiciary. The study therefore hypothesizes that:

H1. Tangibles has a Positive Influence on the Court of Appeal's Customers' Satisfaction.

Reliability of Service Quality and Customers' Satisfaction

Reliability, as defined by the SERVQUAL model, holds immense significance within the context of the Court of Appeal. This dimension highlights the court's obligation to deliver its services consistently and reliably, aligning with the expectations and commitments made to advocates, litigants and all stakeholders involved in the legal proceedings Essential to this concept is the court's commitment to ensuring accessibility and ease of arranging appointments, recognizing the demanding schedules and urgent needs often faced by advocates (Makunya, 2021). According to Moura e Sa et al. (2021), by efficiently scheduling processes and the accommodation of walk-in customers, when possible, the court demonstrates its commitment to fostering trust and confidence among advocates and litigants, ultimately elevating overall satisfaction levels.

Masabo and Wanitzek (2015) demonstrate that reliability extends beyond mere convenience; it covers the court's ability to observe promised timelines for service completion and provide fair and transparent costs estimates prior to servicing. When advocates and litigants rely on the court to deliver its commitments promptly and accurately, it fosters trust and confidence in the judicial system (Makunya, 2021). Additionally, the provision of accurate recommendations and ensuring that discussed services are executed precisely reinforces the court's commitment to reliability and excellence in service delivery (Sandefur, 2020). In protection of these principles, the court not only enhances satisfaction among its customers but also reinforces the integrity and credibility of the legal process. The study therefore hypothesizes that:

H2. Reliability has a Positive Influence on Court of Appeal's Customers' Satisfaction.
Responsiveness Quality and Customers Satisfaction

Responsiveness, the third dimension in the SERVQUAL model, signifies the readiness of service providers to effectively meet the needs of customers, thereby fostering their satisfaction. In the context of the court and advocates' satisfaction, responsiveness encompasses the readiness of court workers to assist advocates and provide prompt and efficient services. This includes their willingness to serve advocates promptly, accelerate transaction processes, and effectively address any complaints or concerns raised by legal practitioners. When court workers demonstrate responsiveness in their interactions with advocates, it not only enhances the efficiency of legal proceedings but also cultivates a sense of trust and confidence in the court system, ultimately contributing to overall satisfaction among advocates and other legal practitioners. Responsiveness is a critical dimension that directly impacts customer satisfaction since it pertains to the willingness and readiness of service providers to assist customers promptly and effectively (Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022). According to Amerta and Madhavi (2023); (Naik et al., 2010) when customers enter a service establishment, the immediacy and attentiveness with which staff members offer assistance contribute significantly to their initial impression and experience. For instance, if upon entry, customers are promptly greeted by staff members who offer assistance or guidance, it creates a positive perception of responsiveness to them. Similarly, the efficiency and friendliness exhibited by receptionist staff at the court's reception further enhance the perception of responsiveness, making customers feel valued and attended to from the moment they step in (Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010; Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021).

Moreover, waiting time before being assisted and served by staff members is a key factor in evaluating responsiveness within the SERVQUAL framework (Naik et al., 2010). Customers expect minimal delays and swift responses to their inquiries or services needed. Long waiting times can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction, irrespective of the clarity of the explanation provided later (Kondo & Vicente, 2023; Naik et al., 2010). Thus, when staff members promptly respond to all inquiries with clear explanations of services offered, it not only fulfils the responsiveness dimension of SERVQUAL but also directly contributes to customer satisfaction (Lee & Lambert, 2006). Customers feel acknowledged, valued and reassured when their needs are addressed promptly, especially in considering the use of ICT in electronic case filling, which has amounted to quick service provision to advocates and comprehensively, leading to a positive overall service experience and heightened satisfaction levels (Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021). The study therefore hypothesizes that:

H3. Responsiveness has a Positive Influence on the Court of Appeal's customers' Satisfaction.
Assurance Quality and Customers' Satisfaction

Assurance, as the third dimension in the SERVQUAL model, comprehends several crucial aspects that directly impact the service experience and customer satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). It revolves around the confidence and trust customers have in the service provider's ability to deliver high-quality services that meet or exceed their expectations (Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021). It also involves the employees' competence in understanding and delivering the services accurately, ensuring that customers receive the right information and assistance (Kitapci et al., 2013). Assurance covers the quality measures undertaken by the service provider to ensure consistency and reliability in service delivery, thereby fostering trust and confidence among customers. Additionally, (Kitapci et al., 2013). contends that assurance extends to the ability of the service

provider to provide a sense of security and reliability, assuring customers that their needs and concerns will be addressed promptly and effectively. Ultimately, assurance plays a crucial role in imparting confidence and trust in customers, contributing significantly to their overall satisfaction with the service experience (Kebede Desta, 2019).

The services rendered to customers reflect a commitment to reliability and consistency, reassuring customers that their needs will be met on time and in accordance with their expectations (Zuniga, 2014) The proactive nature of managing appointment schedules and informing customers about upcoming services, service providers demonstrate their dedication to ensuring a smooth and organized service experience, thus enhancing customers' confidence and trust in the provider (Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021). Additionally, the availability of customer files further reinforces assurance by indicating a systematic approach to managing customer information, which implants a sense of reliability and professionalism (Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022). Customers feel assured knowing that their service history and preferences are well-documented, facilitating personalized and efficient service delivery.

In relation to the courts, assurance is evident in the execution of all services and requests by the court, highlighting a commitment to competence and expertise in service provision. When service providers consistently deliver on their promises and fulfil customer requests with precision and effectiveness, it fosters a sense of trust and assurance among customers (Puri & Singh, 2018). Furthermore, informing customers about the services offered and ensuring transparency in the service process enhances their confidence in the service provider's capabilities and reliability (Alzoubi et al., 2021), This clarity and transparency contribute to a positive service experience, as customers feel reassured and empowered when they have a clear understanding of the services being provided. Ultimately, by addressing the various elements of assurance service providers can significantly influence customer satisfaction, fostering long-term relationships built on trust and confidence. The study therefore hypothesizes that:

H4. Assurance has a Positive Influence on Court of Appeal's Customers' Satisfaction.

Empathy Quality and Customer Satisfaction
Empathy, the final dimension in the SERVQUAL model, encompasses the organization's capacity to demonstrate understanding and attentiveness towards its customers (Pakurár et al., 2019). It captures a range of factors that contribute to fostering a sense of connection between the organization and its customers. One crucial aspect is the ease with which customers can contact the organization, whether through various communication channels such as phone, email or live chat (Daniel & Berinyuy, 2010). This accessibility signals a commitment to being available and responsive to customer needs, thereby enhancing the perception of empathy. Additionally, the ability of the company's employees to communicate effectively with customers plays a pivotal role in demonstrating empathy (Wieseke et al., 2012). Furthermore, empathy extends to the organization's willingness to comprehend customers' desires and preferences. Actively listening to customers' feedback, adapting services to meet evolving needs, and empathizing with individual circumstances, organizations can cultivate strong relationships built on trust, understanding and mutual respect (Pakurár et al., 2019).

Previous findings demonstrate that empathy is closely tied to customer satisfaction through various aspects of service provision (Pakurár et al., 2019). Firstly, when court staff members demonstrate a clear understanding of customer needs and show genuine attention and care, it enhances assurance by signalling competence and attentiveness within the organization (Wieseke et al., 2012). This understanding and attention contribute to customers feeling valued and respected, thereby boosting their confidence in service provision. Furthermore, when staff members take responsibility and apologize promptly for any mistakes made, it reflects accountability and integrity, which are key components of empathy (Leape, 2012). In acknowledging errors and addressing them professionally, staff members reinforce trust and reliability, which are crucial elements in ensuring customer satisfaction in a court of appeal.

Moreover, empathy is reinforced when staff members assist all customers in a caring manner, demonstrating empathy and commitment to customers' well-being (Salameh & El Tarhuni, 2022). This caring approach not only enhances the customers perception of the organization but also fosters a positive emotional connection, contributing to overall satisfaction. Additionally, the ability to contact the organization through telephone or mail and receive timely updates or changes in cases further highlights empathy for customers (Pakurár et al., 2019). Customers feel reassured knowing that they can easily communicate with the organization and stay informed about relevant developments, fostering trust and confidence with the service provider. Overall, empathy plays a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction by imparting confidence, reliability and empathy within the service delivery process. The study therefore hypothesizes that:

H5. Empathy has a Positive Influence on the Court of Appeal's Customers' Satisfaction.

Study Methods and Material
Utilizing a survey questionnaire as the primary research tool, the study included questions specifically designed to align with the five variables of the SERVQUAL model, based on established literature (Cherere et al., 2016), to ensure validity and reliability. Prior to administering the instruments, questionnaires were developed to capture demographic characteristics and items related to the five variables. These questionnaires underwent a thorough validation process, where academics approved their content validity, ensuring that the items accurately reflected the constructs they were intended to measure. Additionally, a pilot test was conducted to assess the respondents' understanding, and ensure relevance. This process not only helped to identify any confusing or misleading questions but also allowed the researchers to make necessary adjustments before the main data collection, ultimately enhancing the quality of the survey instrument and the reliability of the findings (Otto et al., 2020).

The measurement of service quality and customer satisfaction utilized a seven-point Likert scale, a common tool in survey research that effectively gauges respondents' attitudes, opinions or perceptions on a range of issues (Joshi et al., 2015). Constructs for this study were derived from various scholarly works to create a comprehensive framework for analysis. Specifically, the five service quality constructs were measured using nine items for tangibles and seven items each for reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, while satisfaction, as the outcome variable, was assessed with six items by Otto et al. (2020). To gather reliable information about customer satisfaction, advocates were selected as the unit of inquiry due to their regular participation in court proceedings. The Court of Appeal's website, "TanzLII," provided a comprehensive list of

advocates who attended hearings at the Court of Appeals in Dar es Salaam, complete with their email addresses. A systematic sampling approach was employed, contacting a total of 265 advocates from this published list for data collection. Respondents were informed that the study aimed to assess their satisfaction with the operations of the Court of Appeal, with the potential for significant findings to contribute to the improvement of court services. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), was then utilized to empirically test hypotheses concerning the complex relationships among observed and latent variables within the specified theoretical framework.

Measurement Models Analysis
The assessment of the study model's quality involved evaluating both the relationships among items and their underlying constructs (measurement model), and the interrelation between constructs (structural model), using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), as proposed by (Hair & Alamer, 2022) The validity and reliability of the model determines the extent to which the model aligns with the applied theories, ensuring a harmonious balance between theoretical frameworks and empirical findings (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). Thus, reliability was assessed based on the indicator level, referred to as indicator reliability, and the construct level, known as internal consistency reliability. The findings demonstrated in Table 2 indicate that the retained items have loadings exceeding 0.5, while the composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha (α), and rho_ A values surpass 0.7, thereby confirming reliability at both the indicator and construct levels as suggested by (Hair Jr et al., 2020).

The descriptive statistics show a collective agreement among respondents concerning the substantial impact of the five SERVQUAL model concepts on customer satisfaction. Notably, responsiveness (RES), presents the lowest mean value (4.039), while reliability (REL), indicates the highest (5.122), representing varied levels of service quality and their influence on customer satisfaction. Standard deviations of 1.371 for responsiveness (RES), and 1.796 for reliability (REL), imply varying degrees of distribution around the mean, with RS displaying less variability. The interpretation of indices, where values below 3 indicate limited variation in responses, highlights the uniformity in respondents' perspectives. The statistics derived from Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), provide deeper insights into the interplay between SERVQUAL model concepts and the extent of customer satisfaction. The study also examined the instrument's validity, that is assessing the degree to which measurements accurately reflect their intended constructs (Hair Jr et al., 2020). The convergent validity of the measurement models was confirmed through the average variance extracted (AVE), with values exceeding 0.5 for the study constructs, aligning with recommended guidelines by Hair et al. (2020). Additionally, discriminant validity at the construct level was evaluated using the Heterotrai-Monotrait Ratio of Correlation (HTMT), with values reported in Table 1, falling below 0.9. This indicates empirical differences among latent constructs, thus validating the discriminant validity of the items and their underlying constructs(Webber et al., 2020).

Table 1. Discriminant Validity through Heterotrai-Monotrai Ratio (HTMT)

	AS	EM	RE	RS	SAT	TN
AS	**0.728**					
EM	0.517	**0.73**				
RE	0.335	0.291	**0.768**			
RS	0.075	0.068	0.109	**0.764**		

SAT	0.543	0.581	0.516	0.134	**0.822**	
TN	0.41	0.413	0.342	0.063	0.536	**0.715**

Source: Field Data Extracted from Smart PLS3 (2023)

Prior to further data analysis, an assessment of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), was conducted to examine collinearity, which holds the potential to skew path coefficient results (Kock, 2015). The findings, as depicted in Table 2, reveal that the highest VIF values for both inner (construct) and outer (items) are below 4, indicating the absence of multi-collinearity issues and facilitating subsequent analysis. Considering the data collection via a self-administered scale, potential Common Method Bias (CMB), was taken into account. A comprehensive collinearity test based on PLS-SEM was executed, with indices in Table 2, exceeding 4, signifying that CMB did not pose a concern in this analysis (Kock et al., 2021).

Table 2. Collinearity Assessment through

Variable Indicators	Outer VIF Values	Inner VIF Values
AS1	1.447	
AS4	1.303	
AS5	1.559	
AS6	1.900	1.504
AS7	1.659	
EM1	1.520	
EM2	1.524	
EM4	1.861	1.475
EM5	1.945	
EM6	1.751	
EM7	1.518	
RE1	1.384	
RE2	1.595	1.211
RE3	1.623	
RE4	1.487	
RS4	1.335	
RS5	1.466	1.014
RS7	1.208	
SAT1	2.071	
SAT2	2.611	
SAT3	2.166	
SAT4	2.506	
SAT5	1.844	
SAT6	2.474	

TN1	1.955	
TN2	2.307	
TN3	1.718	1.347
TN4	1.884	
TN5	1.833	
TN6	1.73	
TN7	1.616	
TN9	1.451	

Source: Field Data Extracted from Smart PLS3 (2023)

As depicted in Table 2. and Figure 2, all predictive indices for model fit measures, as previously empirically modelled, were found to be significant, confirming the hypothesized relations examined. Empath (EMP), emerged as having the strongest relationship with Customer Satisfaction (SAT) by (0.299), followed by Reliability (REL) at (0.278), Tangibles (TAN) at (0.234), Assurance (ASS) at (0.195) and Responsiveness (RES) with (0.054). Collectively, these factors explain over 55.5 per cent of the variance in the customers' satisfaction (R^2 0.555).

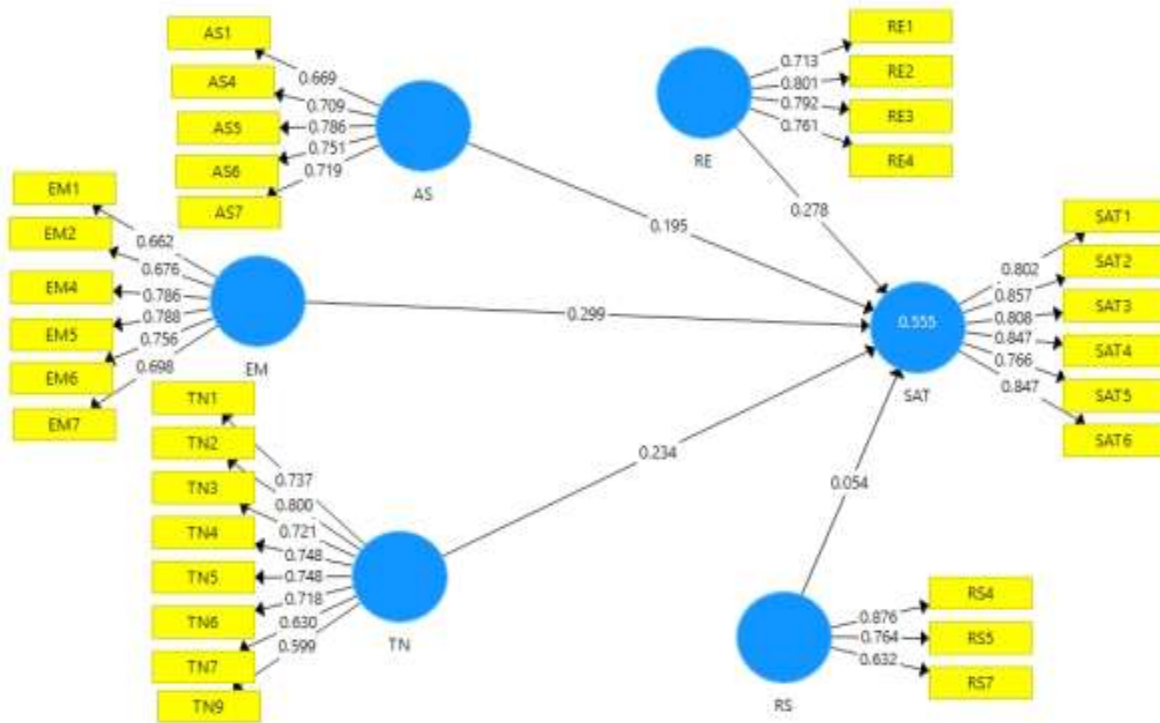**Figure 2: PLS Path Model Results Source: Field Data Extracted from Smart PLS3 (2023)**

Table 3, all values for Q²_predict are positive, and the Root-Mean-Squared Error (RMSE) for items is smaller than the RMSE values in the LM section, suggesting a higher predictive power of the model (Shmueli et al., 2019).The study's final model, featuring factor loadings, explains path coefficients and the explained Variance (R^2) of the independent variables.

Table 3. Out-of-Sample Predictive Power by PLS-Predict RMSE Value

Items	PLM RMSE	LM RMSE	Q²_predict	RMSE (PLS-LM)
SAT1	1.189	1.241	0.304	-0.052
SAT2	1.106	1.138	0.319	-0.032
SAT3	1.156	1.196	0.25	-0.040
SAT4	1.189	1.216	0.356	-0.216
SAT5	1.067	1.081	0.346	-0.014
SAT6	1.126	1.141	0.405	-0.015

Source: Field Data Extracted from Smart PLS3 (2023)

The Effect Size (f^2), ranging from 0.02 (small), to 0.35 (large), as proposed by (Cohen, 1988) measures the influence of a specific predictor variable on the dependent variable. Analysis in Table 4, indicates that the minimum f^2 indices are 0.007 for responsiveness, which is below the threshold of a small range. However, such value is followed by 0.057 assurance, tangible 0.091, empath 0.136, and lastly, reliability 0.143, crossing the threshold for small effect size, thereby signifying the considerable predictive relevance of the path models. Notably, with a Q^2 of 0.367, indicating predictive relevance above zero, the path models in this study demonstrate substantive predictive capacity. On the other hand, low and upper confidence interval for all variables except responsiveness (RES), are between zero and one, signifying those relationships are positive and significant.

Hypothesis Testing Results
Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Std. β	f²	t-Value	p-Values	Confidence Intervals	Decision
AS -> SAT	0.196	0.057	3.222	0.001	0.098: 0.299	Accepted
EM -> SAT	0.296	0.136	5.202	0.000	0.197:0.390	Accepted
RE -> SAT	0.280	0.143	6.034	0.000	0.211:0.358	Accepted
RS -> SAT	0.058	0.007	1.339	0.091	-0.009:0.124	Rejected
TN -> SAT	0.237	0.091	4.274	0.000	0.146:0.320	Accepted

Field Data (2023) Notes: Std. β, Standard Beta; SD, Standard Deviation; f², Effect Size; Q², Predictive Relevance.

The analysis demonstrates that the four hypothesized relationships exhibit positivity and statistical significance at a 5% significance level, employing a one-tailed test. As delineated in Table 4, Tangibles (TAN), Reliability (REL), Assurance (ASS) Empath (EMP) and Responsiveness (RES) are all indicating β>0, SD<3, t-value>1.65, p-value<0.05, implying that these four hypothesized relations are positive and statistically significant. Despite observing β>0, SD<3, a t-value >1.65, and p-values <0.05 in the relationship between responsiveness and customer satisfaction, the confidence intervals include zero, suggesting that the relationship lacks statistical significance. Such insignificance could have been caused by the inconsistent effect of responsiveness on customer satisfaction in the sample studied.

Importance of Performance Map Analysis
Conducting an Importance Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), was essential to provide a tool for the court management with information into areas requiring improvement, potentially to

enhance customer satisfaction based on the services rendered by the Court of Appeal. The IPMA, depicted in Figure 3 with four quadrants, employed a dual-axis representation. Horizontally, attributes ranged from 'not very important' to 'very important', while vertically, perceived performance covered from 'poor' to 'good'. Following the suggestions by (Hair, 2022), the quadrants comprise Q1 (management is satisfactory), Q2 (improvement required), Q3 (excessive performance for less vital issues) and Q4 (insignificant with no notable performance). These quadrants were delineated based on mean performance and importance values, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Report for Importance-Performance Map Analysis
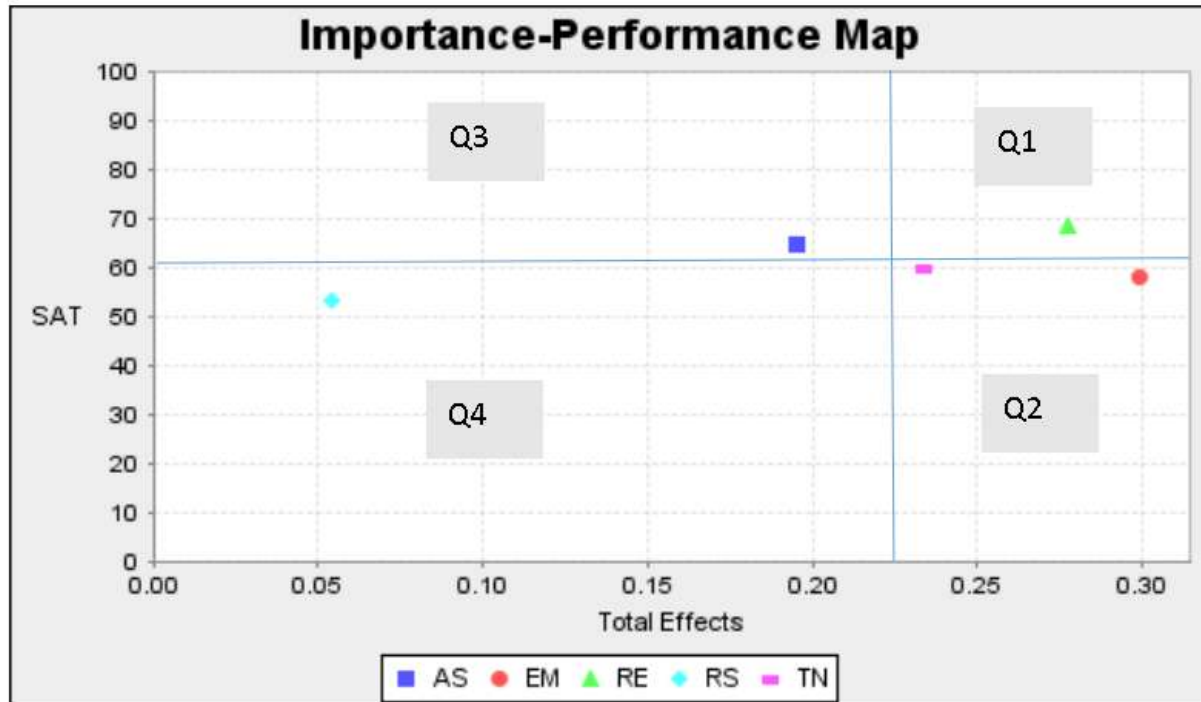
IPMA results from SPL-SEM. Notes: Red: Empath; Blue; Assurance; Pink; Tangibles; Green: Reliability; Cyan; Responsiveness

The analysis reveals that reliability (H2), exhibits both higher performance and importance. Therefore, a unit increase in reliability from 68.38 to 69.38 would result in a 0.287-unit increase in Customer Satisfaction (SAT). On the other hand, tangible (H1) and empathy (H5), are situated in quadrant 2, denoting high importance but low performance. This suggests that enhancing their performance indices could align them with their importance values in influencing customer satisfaction. Assurance (H4), occupies quadrant 3, indicating higher performance with less importance. Notably, a unit increase from 64.86 to 65.84 in assurance would correspond to a 0.195-unit increase in customer satisfaction. However, responsiveness (H3), lacks significance, displaying both low performance and importance in quadrant 4. Therefore, investment and management attention should be directed towards reliability (H2), to foster customer satisfaction in the Court of Appeal. Given its high performance and importance, this variable demands the highest focus to intensify service quality. Resources should be allocated to enhance tangibles (H1) and empathy (H5), shifting their significance from quadrant two to one, while investing in assurance (H4), to elevate its importance from quadrant three to one. Also, reassessment of

responsiveness (H3), within the broader service quality framework, especially as it appeared in quadrant four, indicating lower importance and performance. This may involve conducting a broader assessment of the workers' competence, particularly focusing on responsiveness, to rectify any weaknesses and enhance overall responsiveness, thereby ensuring the delivery of high-quality services to customers.

Discussion of the Findings

The primary objective of this study was to analyze customer satisfaction within the Court of Appeal context, with the SERVQUAL model serving as a framework for this examination. Based on descriptive statistics summarized in Table 2, customer service satisfaction at the Tanzania Court of Appeal focused on the experiences of the advocates who gradually inquired services from this court. Through assessing the advocates' perception in relation to the five service quality dimensions the study measured, customer satisfaction revealed significant variations in mean scores from 4.039 to 5.122 on a Likert scale across all dimensions of service quality. The result of the structural equation model was utilized to test the study's hypotheses, with the proposed model effectively explaining 55.5% ($R^2 = 0.555$) of the variance. The study reveals that four out of five factors in SERVQUAL model positively and significantly impact customer satisfaction, with EMP emerging as the most influential factor (β: 0.296; t-value 05.202; p-value 0.000), followed by EL (β: 0.278; t-value 6.034; p-value 0.000), TAN (β: 0.234; t-value 4.274; p-value 0.001), ASS (β: 0.195; t-value 3.222; p-value 0.001). However, RES (β: 0.054; t-value 1.339; p-value 0.091), was not found to be statistically significant. The analysis results from smart-PLS figure 2 indicates that ten factors (TAN8, REL5, REL6, REL7, RES1, RES2, RES3, ASS2, ASS3 and EMP3), were omitted from the finals model due to their low loadings. Such deletion, according to Hair Jr et al. (2020) does not undermine the quality of the underlying construct, and thus, the quality of the model remains unaffected. The results of the four hypotheses (EMP, TAN, REL and ASS), support the empirical studies that have been conducted in other services sectors in developing economies.

In this finding, the variable 'empathy' emerges as the most influential factor affecting customer satisfaction at the Court of Appeal, highlighting the significant importance customers place on empathetic interactions. The findings of empathy are similar to those shared by Njoki Chege et al. (2019) who examined the role of empathy on customer satisfaction in Kenyan Insurance industry. In their findings, empathy involves acknowledging and responding to the emotional experiences of those engaged in legal proceedings, contributing to a fair judicial system. In this case, customers are satisfied since staffs of the court pay attention to their individual needs, apologize if they commit mistakes or when the customers' requests are not granted. The higher the assistance to customers, the easier it becomes to contact the court administration for prior information given if cases are changed, the higher the customer satisfaction. Tangibles, including accessibility to the court service entrance, signs, reception area, amenities within the court, staff's appearance and overall appearance, were found to have a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction. These tangible factors play a crucial role in shaping the customer experience, ensuring that customers can easily navigate the premises and efficiently find their way with clear signs. Amenities such as seating areas, parking and waiting areas contribute to overall comfort and convenience when participating in court activities. The commitment to service quality is reflected in the appearance of service reception and court facilities, leaving a lasting impression on customers, highlighting the court's dedication to providing accessible and

welcoming services. As a result, these tangible aspects collectively significantly influence the overall satisfaction and perception of customers within the court system. These findings are similar to (Ahmed et al., 2021; Karim, 2020),who noted that, banking service quality positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction.

Based on reliability, it is fundamental for the court staff to ensure customer satisfaction by arranging appointments, providing timely service, transparent cost estimates, guidance and prompt resolution of concerns, all of which sustain reliability in the judicial process. Their efficiency in these areas was found to have a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction in the court. Such results are similar to those of Kumar and Samtani (2021),who examined the influence of reliability among other factors and found a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction in the hotel industry. Also,Monoarfa et al. (2020) examined reliability and customer satisfaction in Lion Air passengers in Indonesia and found a positive and significant relationship. Thus, this highlights that customers have higher expectations in regard to the overall reliability of services at the court. On the other hand, assurance in relation to customer satisfaction at the court involves the creation of confidence in the customer, thereby ensuring the legitimacy and credibility of the judicial process. The results indicate that, assurance has a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction at the Court of Appeal. Factors including reminding customers with appointments, maintaining appointment schedules, updating customers about case dates, allowing them to listen to proceedings, constantly updating them, providing accessibility to their files and meeting their requirements, were identified as crucial for customer satisfaction. Consequently, customers express higher satisfaction levels when these factors contribute to a heightened sense of assurance within the court environment. Similarly, Murhekar et al. (2021) shared a positive and significant relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction in adopting metro services in Delhi based on Delhi Metro Rail Corporation.

Responsiveness being a desire to aid customers at main entrances, reception and prompt assistance, was not considered as crucial for customer satisfaction. However, efforts by staff to minimize waiting times, respond to inquiries and explain services offered did not significantly affect overall customer satisfaction. The observed positive insignificant impact could be attributed to a rise in customer numbers coupled with insufficient staffing levels (Delasay et al., 2019). potentially resulting in reduced responsiveness among the staffs of the court. Consequently, the diminished motivation among staff members may impede operational efficiency, ultimately contributing to customer dissatisfaction (Mofokeng & Aphane, 2022).Thus, this shows that customers have little expectations regarding the overall responsiveness of the services at the court. Despite the notably low responsiveness shown by employees, customers' issues are addressed, leading to the conclusion that the level of responsiveness at the court remains poor, and yet, does not impact customer satisfaction.

Conclusion and Recommendations
Responses from advocates were utilized to assess the service quality dimensions influencing customer satisfaction, revealing that Assurance (ASS), Empathy (EMP), Responsiveness (RES) and Tangibles (TAN), all positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction at the Court of Appeal. However, responsiveness (RES), was found to be statistically insignificant, as it received notably low scores, suggesting a potential rejection of its importance in this context. This

indicates a critical area for improvement; enhancing the responsiveness of judicial officers and court staff is essential, as it may significantly boost overall satisfaction among customers. By focusing on improving how quickly and effectively staff address the needs and inquiries of advocates and other court users, the Court of Appeal can foster a more positive experience for all parties involved. The items used to measure RES show that customers at the court require assistance upon entry and at the reception to familiarize with the complex legal environment effectively. Providing guidance and support during these initial stages ensures a smoother and more satisfactory experience for court customers. Also, there must be an effort to minimize customer waiting time by working hard and more quickly in helping customers to effectively achieve their goals. By striving to accelerate processes, staff can enhance overall efficiency and improve the experience for court customers. In this case, prompt and accurate responses are essential to ensure that customers are satisfied with the court services. This can be achieved by ensuring clarity in explaining services, transparently disclosing charges, and promptly attending to the needs of customers, thereby enhancing their overall experience at the court.

Nevertheless, the low scores or insignificance based on RES towards customer satisfaction, satisfactions vary from one dimension to another. Among the dimensions, Empathy (EMP), ranked first, followed by Responsiveness (RES), Tangibles (TAN) and lastly Assurance (ASS). These four aspects of the service quality were positive and significant predictors of the customers' satisfaction levels at the Court of Appeal. The findings show that court staffs understand and address customers' concerns that significantly influence their satisfaction with court operations, emphasizing the role that empathy plays in shaping the overall customer experience. In relation to responsiveness, staff's promptness and willingness to assist customers will strengthen positive experience that directly impacts satisfaction levels and perceptions of the judicial process. The acknowledgment by respondents of the importance of assurance from court services highlights the imperative for continuous efforts to maintain and enhance service quality. This involves upholding promptness in appointment schedules, providing accurate information, offering regular case updates and ensure easy access to case files. These factors are crucial drivers of satisfaction within the judicial process, highlighting the necessity for courts to invest in these areas. By addressing these needs, courts not only improve overall customer satisfaction, but also foster trust and confidence in the fairness and efficiency of the judicial system, ultimately strengthening their reputation and relationships within the communities they serve. To implement the above, the court must regularly provide employees with training, particularly on operations, to enhance the skills that will help them to deliver fast and reliable service to all its customers.

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