



# Evaluating The Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System Using SERVQUAL Model

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30880/jtet.2023.15.03.005>

Received 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023; Accepted 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023; Available online 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

**Abstract:** The TVET program has been successful in providing highly skilled individuals to meet the demands of the labor market. However, it is important to evaluate the delivery of the program to ensure that it continues to meet these demands. This study focused on analyzing the delivery of the TVET competency assessment and certification system in Davao de Oro, Philippines. The study utilized a descriptive survey method and adopted the (Service Quality) SERVQUAL model to assess service quality. The results revealed that there is a gender gap distribution among male and female clients who availed of the process of competency assessment and certification system. The study also found that empathy obtained a negative gap score (-0.03) in the process. This negative score implies that empathy is as important as other dimensions of service quality. However, other dimensions of service quality have met the expectations of clients and obtained a positive score. Overall, respondents have perceived the implementation of the technical vocational education and training TVET competency assessment and certification system to be satisfactory. To improve the service quality, it is necessary to provide appropriate information about processing time and documentary requirements to all clients and equip personnel in handling clients proactively. Relationship-based management should also be improved to promote holistic technical vocational education and training (TVET) service quality, particularly in competency assessment and certification systems.

**Keywords:** SERVQUAL model, service quality, competency, assessment, TVET

## 1. Introduction

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), in their Sustainable Development Goals report of 2016-2030, quoted Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a strategy for the development of sustainable societies and economies, promoting social mobility through lifelong learning, access and equity and eradicating unemployment for sustainable development. Furthermore, TVET is necessary for sustainable development by empowering individuals, enterprises, organizations, and communities to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability (Makinde & Bamiro, 2023). The training highlighted that the TVET is critical in addressing cognitive and skills challenges to achieve SDGs. It can aid in developing an appropriate mindset and attitude to create employment-ready individuals through well-designed training programs. However, strengthening policies and skills strategies is essential to maximize their impact. (Makinde & Bamiro, 2023) They highlighted a broad consensus in the system for socio-economic development, in the focus of government policies on education, a report by international organizations on sustainable development and solutions to prevailing challenges facing socio-economic conditions which favoured Technical Vocational Educational and Training (TVET). Moreover,

Azeem Khaizer Omar (2019) states that the core role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is to develop professional skills in youth, mastering basic knowledge and scientific principles so that they can prepare them for work. In this way, the appropriate administration of TVET in a country will aid the government in creating an industry-ready individual who could adopt trends (Raza et al., 2020).

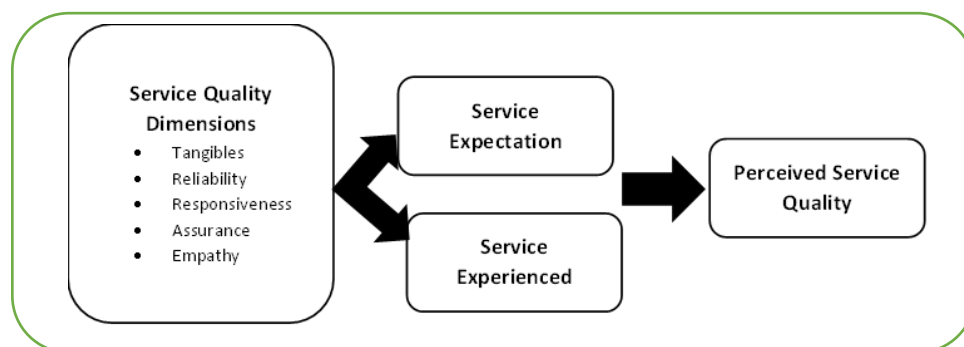
In the case of the Philippines, technical vocational education and training have been strengthened through the enactment of universal access to quality tertiary education, including TVET programs. It allowed stakeholders to access Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs in the country. The law provides other assistance mechanisms for eligible, financially disadvantaged students (Kristina et al., 2020.). In effect, the enrolment rate has increased, which makes all Technical Vocational Education and Training TVET processes in the country accessible across stakeholders.

According to (Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the Philippines in the Age of Industry 4.0, 2021), Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA) is the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) authority in the Philippines. TESDA's programs and policies ensure quality and clarify priorities for TVET through research studies, standards development, and certification and information dissemination. In this way, the agency, as ISO certified organization, monitors and evaluates every process to ensure its quality. The agency administers various programs, including competency standards development, competency assessment, and certification and program registration.

In governing TVET, policies are in place to create a safeguard mechanism to serve TVET clients appropriately. Knowing the service quality of TVET is necessary to develop appropriate actions to continually offer strategies that will help educational delivery and make an industry-ready graduate of TVET. Service quality has received increasing attention in governance and public management, especially in the higher education sector globally (Hong & Han, 2020). Existing studies have recognized the significant association between service quality and education, especially service quality and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). It proves that service quality provides an essential key to ensuring client satisfaction.

This study aims to determine the service quality of the TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in Davao de Oro. The province is in the Middle Eastern region of Davao. The TESDA Davao de Oro provincial office is committed to determining its service quality to monitor and craft internal mechanisms for quality assurance in its jurisdiction. In this way, this study further examines the satisfaction level of the delivery of competency assessment and certification systems to provide research-based actions to provide services with quality continually. The study follows the SERVQUAL framework. It utilizes the SERVQUAL instrument designed to rate the level of customer satisfaction of services is the SERVQUAL (Service Quality) model scale developed by Parasuraman et. Al. (1988).

The adopted framework provides various service dimensions, which will cover the following. Tangibility: physical facilities, equipment, and personnel appearance; Reliability: ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. Responsiveness: willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Assurance: knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Empathy: caring, individualized attention the firm provides to its customers. Further highlighted, the SERVQUAL model facilitates identifying areas with the greatest return on investment (Gregory, 2019). It can give the conditions detailed actionable information that could improve the execution of activities.



**Fig. 1 - The framework of the study**

As reflected in Figure 1, there are service quality dimensions that are showcased by the SERVQUAL Model. These dimensions help determine the variance between service expectations and experiences in the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Competency and Assessment Certification in the Province of Davao de Oro. The gap between the service expectation and service experience in the Competency and Assessment Certification would provide reliable information on the perceived service quality provided to the clientele of the Provincial Office of Technical

Education and Skills Development in Davao de Oro. Utilizing the SERVQUAL model as a framework for the study can provide valuable insights into customer perceptions of service quality and guide organizations in enhancing their services to meet customer expectations more effectively. The main purpose of the study is to assess the quality of service provided by the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in Davao de Oro Province. The study has three specific objectives:

- To gather information about the respondents' gender, educational attainment, and employment status.
- To evaluate the service quality of the Competency Assessment and Certification System in Davao de Oro Province using the SERVQUAL model. This evaluation will focus on tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.
- To determine the level of satisfaction in the application of accreditation for assessment centres, competency assessor accreditation, and assessment conduct.

## 2. Methodology

A study was carried out in Davao de Oro to evaluate the quality of service provided by the Philippine TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System. The research methodology involved descriptive research, and a survey was conducted using the SERVQUAL (service quality) model, which covers tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy aspects. The study provides an overview of the service quality of the TVET competency assessment and certification system in Davao de Oro.

### 2.3 Population and Sampling

This study focuses on the accredited competency assessors, AC managers/focal persons, and certified workers in the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority in the Province of Davao de Oro, Philippines. The study used purposive sampling and achieved an 85% retrieval rate.

### 2.4 Instrumentation

For this study, a survey questionnaire was utilized through a free application-based program. The questionnaire was distributed to specifically identified respondents. (Mason et al., 2018) stated that the SERVQUAL component consists of a standardized questionnaire that includes two statements for each of the 22 items representing the five service dimensions. An "expectations" section is used to measure the expectations of students concerning a service, while a "perceptions" section is used to measure their assessments of that service (Perez, Abad, Carrillo & Fernandez, 2007). Four of the 22 statements are used to measure tangibles, five for reliability, four for responsiveness, four for assurance and five for empathy. Statements in both sections use a five-point Likert scale anchored by "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1) (Curry & Sinclair, 2002)

### 2.5 Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed through descriptive analysis using mean and frequency counts of the expectations, perceptions and service quality gaps of students. To calculate service quality satisfaction, mean scores are used and for the SERVQUAL gaps were calculated and compared expectations and perceptions of the respondents among tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy.

### 2.6 Ethical Consideration

The study employs the conduct of ethical approval and informed consent was obtained from all the respondents of the study.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Results revealed that 89 out of 100 target respondents participated, resulting in a response rate of 89%. The study's findings indicate that 67% of the respondents are male, while 33% are female. This gender distribution suggested that the TVET certification system might be more popular among males, or it could reflect the gender makeup of the workforce in the area. The gender gap in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as observed in Alinea (2022) presents a challenge to inclusivity. Gender discrimination, cultural factors, and parenting styles are influencing career choices. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (73%) have obtained a baccalaureate degree, while a smaller percentage (3%) are technical-vocational graduates. This finding implies that individuals with higher education levels are engaging with the TVET certification system. Professionals are increasingly participating in technical vocational education and training programs as they have found it to be beneficial for their career growth (Ambag, n.d.). Out of the respondents, 73% have permanent employment, while 4% are self-employed. This implies that those who are already employed may be utilizing the TVET certification system to meet job expectations or improve their abilities for professional growth. The results of this study have important implications for how people view and use the TVET system

in the area. By figuring out why individuals with higher education are pursuing TVET certifications, we can gain insights on how to improve TVET offerings to meet their needs. Furthermore, closing the perception gap may require promoting the value of TVET programs to enhance skills and career prospects, regardless of previous educational achievements.

**Table 1 - Profile of the respondents**

Characteristics	Description	Percentage
Gender	Male	67.00%
	Female	33.00%
Educational Attainment	Bachelor	73.00%
	Masters	15.00%
	Doctoral	1.00%
	Technical Vocational	3.00%
	others	8.00%
Employment Status	Permanent	73.00%
	Contractual	22.00%
	Self-employed	4.00%

### 3.1 Overall SERVQUAL Scores

Table 2 summarizes the expectation, perception, and gap of each SERVQUAL dimension among all respondents. The results showed that only the Empathy dimension had a negative gap in the TVET competency assessment and certification system in the Province of Davao de Oro. A negative score indicates that empathy deserves attention. (Makinde & Bamiro, 2022) stated that the empathy dimension refers to the personal attention provided by the firm to its customers, including unbiased treatment, attention to all clients, and a caring and supportive environment. It further highlighted that empathy is the dimension of service quality that has a significant effect on customers' satisfaction levels. Therefore, a program that directly provides an understanding of customers' needs and expectations in processing competency assessment and certification system in the TESDA Provincial office of Davao de Oro should be established to continuously improve the quality of services provided to clients. It is important to highlight the importance of empathy in the TVET certification system. This is not only to meet customer expectations but also to improve overall service quality.

The competency assessment and certification system in the Province of Davao de Oro is highly dependable, as evidenced by the highest positive gap reflected in Table 2. This signifies that the office has established exceptionally reliable procedures that exceed customer expectations. Research, reliability is a crucial factor that significantly influences overall customer satisfaction (Makinde & Bamiro, 2022). Moreover, it affirms that all dimensions have a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction and subsequently, customer loyalty (Raza et al., 2020). This emphasizes the critical role of service quality in every activity and process.

**Table 2 - Summary of SERVQUAL scores**

Dimensions	Expectation	SD	Perception	SD	Gap
Tangibles	4.16	0.05	4.35	0.18	0.19
Reliability	3.98	0.09	4.26	0.10	0.28
Responsiveness	4.03	0.19	4.19	0.05	0.16
Assurance	3.91	0.03	4.15	0.08	0.24
Empathy	4.26	0.34	4.23	0.06	-0.03

### 3.2 Tangibles Dimension

The results of the Tangible Dimension assessment, as shown in Table 3, indicate that clients perceive the quality of the competency assessment and certification system to be higher than their initial expectations. This is a positive outcome and suggests that the system has left a favourable impression on the clients. The positive gap scores calculated also indicate that the service quality is higher than what the respondents expected, which is desirable as it means that the service provider is meeting or exceeding customer expectations. It can be inferred that the office's physical facilities and infrastructure have contributed to this positive perception. In addition, the structural model and its direct effects on service quality are significant (Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019). Physical facilities and infrastructure play a vital role in shaping customers' perceptions and loyalty. This means that a well-structured and supportive environment, represented by physical facilities, contributes to the overall image and loyalty of clients. Ultimately, a positive physical environment enhances the overall customer experience.

### 3.3 Reliability Dimension

The results show that the process of assessing and certifying competencies is considered reliable, with a high average score. This is a positive result that indicates the process is consistent and dependable in its delivery. These high scores lead to positive overall ratings, suggesting that the process aligns well with the promised level of reliability and accuracy, exceeding customer expectations. The alignment of the delivery process with promised reliability and accuracy is a strong indication of the TVET competency assessment and certification system's dedication to its clients. This supports the idea that delivering services quickly increases customer satisfaction (Umoke et al., 2020). Therefore, a dependable and efficient process has a positive impact on clients' perceptions. Finally, the TVET competency assessment certification system's commitment to delivering consistent and accurate services contributes positively to customer satisfaction.

### 3.4 Responsiveness Dimension

The Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA) competency assessment and certification system in Davao de Oro has been unwavering in its pursuit of delivering exceptional service, thereby imbuing its clients with a sense of confidence in the quality and reliability of its offerings. Furthermore, the study highlighted the positive gap scores that the system has received in the responsiveness dimension, which indicates their willingness and promptness to address their clients' concerns and provide them with viable solutions. This dimension has been shown to have a significant impact on the overall service quality (Raza et al., 2020). It goes without saying that the system's steadfast commitment to delivering appropriate service is vital in bolstering its clients' trust in the process, which is crucial for fostering a positive and mutually beneficial relationship between service providers and their clients.

Respondents perceived a negative score (-0.05) for the aspect "should never be too busy to respond to customers' requests." shown in Table 3 responsiveness dimension. This indicates that customers' expectations in this aspect are not being met by their actual experiences with the service. The negative gap score signifies that customers expect a higher level of responsiveness in terms of prompt and timely responses to their requests than what they are experiencing. Promptly addressing customers' inquiries and concerns contributes to their overall satisfaction and positive perception of the service. It is suggested that personnel assigned to customer requests should provide accurate information about wait times for different steps of the Competency Assessment and Certification System. Accurate information helps manage customer expectations and prevents dissatisfaction due to incorrect information. It can lead to improvements in the overall service delivery aligning with the goal of enhancing the TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System.

### 3.5 Assurance Dimension

Results shown in Table 3 indicate a significant increase in the perceived service quality in terms of the assurance dimension. This means that the competency assessment and certification system's delivery process in the Province of Davao de Oro has exceeded the expectations of all its clients. This increase in perceived quality is attributed to the knowledge and courtesy of the personnel involved in the process. The competence and attitude of personnel play a crucial role in building trust and confidence among clients. In addition, the knowledge and courtesy of personnel contribute to building trust and confidence among clients. It provides clients feel that they are being served by knowledgeable and courteous staff leading to a positive perception of the service. It is highlighted that the assurance dimension, when executed effectively, can lead to increased satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth attitude among clients (Al Ali, (2021). Moreover, the conduct of training and ongoing development for personnel, continuous communication with clients, and addressing any potential challenges that might arise can contribute in maintaining a high level of assurance in the service delivery.

Finally, the assurance dimension highlights the significance of knowledgeable and courteous personnel in creating a positive service experience and building client trust and confidence.

### 3.6 Empathy Dimension

Table 3 shows the empathy dimension which emphasizes the expectation mean and perception mean. In this section, empathy obtained a negative gap score of (0.59) particularly in the aspect of "employees should give customers personal services." This implies that clients' perception of this dimension has declined compared to their expectations. The importance of employees giving customers personal attention, as it has a significant impact on satisfaction. Furthermore, it underlines the need for a customer-centric approach to service delivery. Also, employees need to be empathetic and provide appropriate attention to clients' needs. Empathetic understanding and personalized attention contribute to a positive customer experience. Empathetic understanding is a crucial attribute when it comes to delivering quality services that promote relationship-based practice (Hassan & Shamsudin, 2019).

It is noteworthy that the empathy dimension in delivering service quality requires equal importance among all SERVQUAL dimensions. Since this has a potential impact on the level of client satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. In doing so, competency assessment and certification systems can work towards improving the overall quality of its services and strengthening client relationships.

**Table 3 - SERVQUAL dimension results**

Dimensions	Statements	Expectation Mean	Perception Mean	SD	Gap Score
<b>Tangibles</b>	TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in the Province of Davao de Oro should have modern equipment.	4.15	4.50	0.13	0.35
	Their physical facilities (shelves, customer service counters, computers, lights) should be visually appealing.	4.22	4.41	0.13	0.19
	Their employees should be well-dressed and appear neat.	4.11	4.14	0.02	0.03
<b>Reliability</b>	When provider promises to do something by a certain time, they should do so.	4.10	4.38	0.19	0.29
	When a customer has a problem, a provider should show a sincere interest in solving it.	3.90	4.21	0.21	0.31
	Provider should perform the service right the first time.	4.09	4.29	0.14	0.21
	They should provide their services at the time they promise to do so.	3.95	4.11	0.11	0.16
	They should keep their records accurately.	3.90	4.30	0.28	0.40
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Employees should make information easily obtainable by the customer	3.95	4.20	0.17	0.25
	Employees should give prompt service to customers.	3.96	4.17	0.15	0.21
	Employees are always willing to help customers.	3.88	4.13	0.18	0.25
	Employees in TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in the Province of Davao de Oro should never be too busy to respond to customers' requests.	4.32	4.27	0.03	-0.05
<b>Assurance</b>	The behavior of employees in TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in the Province of Davao de Oro should instill confidence in customers	3.93	4.09	0.11	0.16
	Customers should be able to feel safe in their transactions with Employees at the counters.	3.94	4.09	0.10	0.15
	Their employees should be polite.	3.87	4.15	0.19	0.29
	Employees of TVET Competency Assessment and Certification System in the Province of Davao de Oro should have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.	3.91	4.26	0.24	0.36
<b>Empathy</b>	Provider should give customers individual attention.	4.06	4.27	0.14	0.21
	Their operating hours should be convenient for all their customers	4.11	4.29	0.13	0.19
	Employees should give customers personal service.	4.78	4.20	0.41	-0.59
	The employees should understand the specific needs of their customers.	4.10	4.15	0.03	0.05

### 3.7 Level of Satisfaction in the Implementation of Competency Assessment and Certification System

The study uses the 5-point Likert scale to assess the level of satisfaction among respondents in terms of the 4 elements of technical vocational education and training (TVET) competency assessment and certification system which includes

the application accreditation of assessment centers, application of competency assessor accreditation, the conduct of assessment and the issuance of national certification. Table 4 revealed that among the four processes, the process of application of competency assessor obtained the highest mean score 4.27 while the process of issuance of national certificates got the lowest mean score 4.11. Evidently, the high satisfaction in the application of competency assessor accreditation contributed to the increased satisfaction among respondents in the competency assessment and certification process. This is influenced by the degree of awareness of assessor applicants in the process, and the established relationship among and between personnel in charge of the process. In this way, clarity of procedures, efficiency, and quality of support from the implementing unit have contributed to the increased level of satisfaction.

These results imply that respondents are descriptively satisfied with all processes under the competency assessment and certification system in the Province of Davao de Oro, Philippines. Overall, the satisfaction level of the respondents got a mean of 4.18 which means they are satisfied. It suggests a positive perception of the system. Also, there is a strong positive relationship between service quality and satisfaction in technical vocational education and training (TVET) (Abiodun Makinde & Oluwatosin Bamiro Corresponding Author, n.d.).

**Table 4 - Level of satisfaction in the implementation of competency assessment and certification system in the Province of Davao de Oro**

Categories	Mean	SD	Descriptive Rating
1. Application Accreditation of Assessment Center	4.21	0.25	Satisfied
2. Application of Competency Assessor Accreditation	4.27	0.30	Satisfied
3. Conduct of Assessment	4.15	0.21	Satisfied
4. Issuance of National Certificates	4.11	0.15	Satisfied
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.18</b>		<b>Satisfied</b>

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that various factors under the profile of the respondents have revealed that gender distribution in TVET is frequently common to males compared to females. This distribution suggested expanding and exploring alternative gender inclusivity programs to encourage more female workers in technical vocational education and training (TVET). The gender distribution may be increased through an alternative way of attracting women professionals to engage in TVET careers to make an equitable labour workforce. Furthermore, young professional engaging in TVET careers suggests that Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA) programs need to be initiated to increase accessibility, and skills development and promote active participation in all (TVET) activities, especially in the Competency Assessment and Certification system. In this way, it can widen the technical vocational education and training (TVET) offerings in the community that meets the expectation of the community through its service delivery and programs.

Furthermore, the SERVQUAL Model provides holistic dimensions that would cover the service quality of (TVET). In the abovementioned discussion, among all dimensions of the model, the empathy dimension needs to be given equal importance same as other dimensions since it can affect the overall service quality of (TVET). Empathy dimension enhancement activities for personnel under competency assessment and certification system are suggested, in order to improve personal attention and delivery to all its clients. In this way, it will offer process improvement not only in the competency assessment and certification system but TVET. Furthermore, it will provide a mechanism for meeting the expectations of its clients and offer development in all service delivery of (TVET).

In addition, the study concludes that a high perception of other SERVQUAL dimensions has contributed to the high satisfaction level in the competency assessment and certification system implemented in the (TVET) Province of Davao de Oro. In this way, it is recommended to provide appropriate information about the processing time, and documentary requirements to all clients and adequately equip personnel to handle clients proactively and improve relationship-based management to promote holistic technical vocational education and training (TVET) processing.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the Provincial Office of Technical Education and Skills Development of Davao de Oro for facilitating the conduct of this research. This provides comprehensive information to provide development in the delivery of services in TVET.

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