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**Evaluating Tourism Service Quality Provided to the European Tourist**  
**“Applied on the British tourist”**

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## **Abstract**

Service quality (SERVQUAL) has received a considerable attention in the last 50 years. While Service quality are well documented in the literature review, fewer studies have been investigates the relationship of Service quality with customer satisfaction and behaviour intention, and particularly in tourism. The aim of this paper is to examine the causal direct and indirect impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. A total of 390 usable responses were obtained with a response rate of 71%. Structural equation modelling was used to analysis the current research data. The structural equation modelling results indicate that all the employed dimension to measure service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) have direct influence on customer satisfaction and indirect impact on behaviour intention through customer satisfaction. These results help to clarify the mixed findings in the literature concerning the pattern of the causal relationship between service quality with customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. Finally, conclusions and limitations are outlined.

## **Key words:**

Service quality, customer satisfaction, behaviour intention, SERVPERF

## **Introduction**

Since 1990's there have been several literatures on the service quality, especially on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and service quality and behavioral intention in various industries, and developing recommendations to increase service performance and overall profitability (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Carman 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Asubonteng et al., 1996; Lee & Cunningham 2001; Jones et al., 2002; Santos, 2003).

Despite the important theoretical role of service quality in improving customer satisfaction and behavioral intention, as previously explained, few empirical studies have investigated this relationship. However , there is contradiction in the literature concerning (1) the dimensional structure of service quality and (2) which service quality dimensions can affect customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

The aim of the current study is to evaluate the service quality regarding customer satisfaction and behavioral intention .

This study is applied on the British tourist, according to UNWTO (2010) the world's four major spender on tourism are Germany (US\$ 83 billion), followed by the USA (US\$ 77 billion), UK(US\$ 73 billion) and France (US\$ 37 billion). Moreover, the large number of Egyptian visitors comes from UK, Russia, and Italy (Ministry of Tourism, 2009).

In light of the above, and taking into consideration the high expenditure rate of the UK visitors and the large number that comes to Egypt, the current study aims to evaluate the tourism service quality provided to UK tourists regarding their satisfaction and behavioural intention.

### **Service quality**

Quality is gaining in importance in all areas of life. In tourism too, guests require "products" where they are guaranteed of getting high-quality, value-for-money services. The further reasons for organised quality in tourism are widely documented: growing competition, lack of willingness to provide a service, growing loss of individuality by standardization of products (Unwto, 2004). Service Quality has been defined differently by different authors. Parasuraman et al. (1985) defined service quality as "the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' perceptions and expectations", and "Perceived service quality" as "the gap between customers' expectations and perceptions, as a measurement of service quality". So, the smaller the gap, the better the service quality provided, and the greatest the customer satisfaction.

Measuring service quality has received increasing attention in recent years in the tourism literature (Hudson & et al, 2004). Literature including service quality in the hospitality industry can be categorized into three major groups: human resource related, strategy and management related, and service quality measurement issues. Some examples of the service quality articles related to the measurement of service quality using the SERVQUAL or modified instrument to identify the perception of service quality in the hospitality industry (Douglas, Connor, 2003: Juwaheer & Ross, 2003: Antony, Antony, & Ghosh, 2004:Ndhlovu & Senguder, 2002: Chen, Ekinici, Riley, Yoon, & Tjelflaat, 2001: Tsang & Qu, 2000: Ingram & Daskalakis, 1999: Mei, Dean, & White, 1999: Gabbie & O'Neill, 1996: Webster & Hung, 1994: Saleh & Ryan, 1991). Another group concerns the constructs of service quality measurement combined with those using other techniques. This group includes Getty & Getty (2003), Olorunniwo, Hsu, & Udo (2003), Ekinici & Riley (1999), Stauss & Weinlich (1997), Randall & Senior (1992), Wisner &

Corney (1997), Hersh(2010), Akbaba(2006 ), Haghkhah & et al (2011) , Yu et al ( 2005), , Clemenz. (2001).

## **Service Quality Dimensions**

Regardless of the type of service, consumers used basically similar criteria in evaluating service quality. These criteria seem to fall into 10 key categories which are labelled service quality determinants (dimensions) that company executives consistently mentioned in terms of consumers' evaluations of service quality. Parasuraman et al., (1985) defined the ten determinants of service quality as follows ( Reliability , Responsiveness , Competence, Access , Courtesy ,Communication, Credibility ,Security ,Understanding andTangibles )

Further and more quantitative research made by Parasuraman et al. (1988) three years after their initial article on service quality led these researchers to conclude that consumers use five underlying dimensions in judging service quality, so these ten were later reduced to five through exploratory factor analysis by Parasuraman, et al. (1988). The five final dimensions factored down to:

- 1- Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipment, appearance of personnel and communication materials.
- 2- Reliability: Ability to perform the promise service dependably and accurately.
- 3- Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- 4- Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- 5- Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

These five dimensions appear again along with the scale developed to measure them, called "SERVQUAL". These dimensions represent how consumers organize information about service quality in their mind (Zeithaml & et al, 2006).

## **The measurement of service quality:**

The conceptualization and measurement of service quality perceptions have been the most debated topics in the services marketing literature to date. This debate continues today, as is marked from the on-going and largely failed attempts either to mix the

SERVQUAL/SERVPERF conceptualization into new industries (e.g., Durvasula, Lysonski, and Mehta 1999; Kettinger, Lee, and Lee 1995) or to repeat its conceptual structure (e.g., Asubonteng, McCleary, and Swan 1996; Kettinger and Lee 1995; Mels, Boshoff, and Nel 1997; Van Dyke, Kappelman, and Prybutok 1997). Indeed, perceived service quality has proved to be a difficult concept to understanding. A call for research that specifically examines the "dimensionality" of the service quality construct (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry ,1994) has yet to be successfully addressed.

Given the importance of customers' perceptions of quality in a service context, it is no surprise that numerous studies have been devoted to its measurement (Ladhari, 2008). Examples of service quality models include the Nordic model (Grönroos, 1984; 2007); SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor, 1992); and SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988). SERVQUAL is probably the most commonly used model applied and examined across a variety of tourism and leisure contexts and is hence described in more detail (Radder & Han, 2011)

It is generally might be accepted today that service quality is a multi-dimensional construct (this assumption will be tested in the current study through exploratory factor analysis). There have been a variety of service quality models (measures) in the literature. One of the widely used models is the SERVQUAL/SEVPERF (Kouthouris & Alexandris ,2005)

### **SERVQUAL model**

SERVQUAL model based on the original conceptual gap model of service quality produced by Parasuraman et al. (1985 , 1988 and 1991). The SERVQUAL model consists of 22 items on service attributes developed by Parasuraman & et al., (1988) which are grouped along the five dimensions of tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy to measure customers' expectations (E) and perceptions (P) of the five RATER dimensions. Four or five numbered items are used to measure each dimension. The SERVQUAL was a questionnaire that examined customers' perceived service quality by measuring customer expectation in the first portion, and their perceived service performance in the second portion (Narangajavana, 2007).

However its growing popularity and widespread application, SERVQUAL has been subjected to a number of criticisms Buttle (1996). Additionally, despite the fact that the SERVQUAL model might be an excellent instrument for measuring service quality, several researchers comment on the SERVQUAL model, indicating that there are some shortcomings and defects associated with

SERVQUAL, The SERVQUAL was criticized for its predictive power, and length. Hoffman and Bateson (2006) argued about the length of the SERVQUAL questionnaire because it consists of 44 questions to measure customer expectations and perceptions. This may result in respondent fatigue. Cronin (1992: 1994) and Brady, Cronin, and Brand (2002) preferred the use of only perception of service performance to measure service quality ( Narangajavana,2007 and Zhang, 2009).

Hoffman and Bateson (1997) mentioned the critique about the predictive power of the SERVQUAL (measuring both expectation and perception): that its ability to predict customer purchase intention was less than the modified instrument that measured only the perception of service performance. Service quality required customer satisfaction as a mediating variable that affected purchase intention. Cronin & Taylor (1992) stated, “service quality is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and that consumer satisfaction exerts a stronger influence on purchase intentions than does service quality.” They suggested for managerial purpose the customer satisfaction program should be more emphasized than strategies that focused exclusively on service quality (Narangajavana, 2007).

Regards the measurement of expectations, Baron and Harris (2003) stress that the timing of expectation measurements is of crucial importance. In SERVQUAL, respondents must rate their expectations and perceptions of a particular service on the same scale for each of 22 items. Moreover, respondents are often interviewed only once and questioned to rate both their expectations and perceptions on one occasion. If respondents are using these retrospective expectations in their post-purchase evaluations, the initially measured expectations are disputable by biased experience of the respondents (Zhang, 2009).

These above-mentioned criticisms and other criticisms led Cronin and Taylor (1992; 1994) to conclude that it is much better to use questions about performance (=perception) and delete all the questions on expectations. That is the essence of their SERVPERF model. In fact, the SERVPERF model is based on the perception items in SERVQUAL. One of the arguments is that the predictive validity of using only the perceptions component is higher than in using the difference (perception-expectation) scores (Parasuraman et al 1994, and Zhang.2009).

It has also been argued that the performance-only measure proposed by Cronin and Taylor (1994), the SERVPERF, explains more variance in an overall measure of service quality than SERVQUAL instrument (Tahir Jan, 2012)

### **The SERVPERF Measurement (Performance-based measure)**

Since 1990's there have been many literatures on the service quality, especially on the factors which affect customer satisfaction, loyalty, and behaviour intention in various industries, and developing recommendations to increase service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Carman 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Asubonteng et al., 1996; Lee & Cunningham 2001; Jones et al., 2002; Santos, 2003). There has also been studies done on the airline industry (Chin, 2002), hotels industry (Pei et al., 2006), and banking services (Haron, et al., 1994; Levesque & McDougall, 1996; Babakus et al., 2004).

The empirical research of Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggested that measuring service quality from only the perceptions of the service experience. For more consistent results of the analysis of a structural model, they recommended using "SERVPERF" -a modified SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988) include the physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of the staff (Tangibles); the dependability and accuracy of the service provider (Reliability); the ability to know and willingness to cater to customer needs (Responsiveness); the ability of staff to instil confidence and trust in the company (Assurance); and finally, the ability of the staff in providing a caring service to customers (Empathy). Instead of measuring both customer expectations and perceptions as in the SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF was operationalized by only one part of the perceived performance. It did not assess the gap scores between expectation and perception as the expectation does not exist in the SERVPERF. Therefore, by excluding the measurement of customer expectation, a total of only 22 items remained in the new measure. Cronin and Taylor (1992) concluded that the SERVPERF was a superior service quality measurement in comparison to the SERVQUAL. In addition, the results demonstrated that the new measure had more predictive power on the overall service quality judgment than the original instrument (Narangajavana, 2007).

Moreover, while it seems logical that identifying the gaps is the best way to define quality, identify possible problems and predict loyalty, there have been some researchers (e.g., Cronin &



Taylor, 1992; Teas, 1993), who questioned the gap model, suggesting that measuring perceptions alone might be a better indicator of service quality, than measuring the differences between expectations and perceptions (Robledo, 2001; Zeithaml et al., 1996). From a methodological point of view, it is not always easy to adopt the gap approach, since in a real life setting it requires to collect data twice (before and after using the service) from the same customers, and compare their answers.

In the same vein, the study conducted by Lee & et al (2000) to test whether SERVPERF better than SERVQUAL in measuring overall service quality in an entertainment park as the facility/equipment-based firm and an aerobic school and an investment consulting firm as the people-based firm, finding stated that performance only (SERVPERF) explains more variance in overall service quality than does the difference between expectation and performance (SERVQUAL).

Additionally, the study conducted by Jain and Gupta (2004) supported the above assumption and made a comparative assessment of the SERVQUAL and the SERVPERF scales in the Indian context in terms of their validity, ability to explain variance in the overall service quality, power to distinguish among service objects/firms, parsimony in data collection, and, more importantly, their diagnostic ability to provide insights for managerial interventions in case of quality shortfalls. To find that while the SERVPERF scale is a more convergent and discriminant valid explanation of the service construct, possesses greater power to explain variations in the overall service quality scores, and is also a more parsimonious data collection instrument, the study findings is that when one is interested simply in assessing the overall service quality of a firm or making quality comparisons across service industries, one can employ the SERVPERF scale because of its psychometric soundness and instrument parsimoniousness. In the same context, Cronin and Taylor (1994) defended that the SERVPERF also provided practical values to managers. They supposed that the performance-based measure of service quality could offer a longitudinal index of the service quality perceptions, relative to time and customer subgroups. Their final thoughts did not commit them to remain supportive to the SERVQUAL, yet remained confident of their SERVPERF.

Previous studies have shown that a perception study based on tourist experiences has been widely utilized to measure service or product quality. Among the popular models is the SERVPERF model introduced by Cronin and Taylor (1992), who improved the five service quality constructs of SERVQUAL: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Different from SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF model collects opinions on service quality based on the perceptions of the tourists after experiencing or using the services or products. A perception study is based on the argument that tourist satisfaction is a consequence of service quality (Kumra, 2008). This means that tourist satisfaction can be explained by the positive perception a visitor gains as a result of his or her experience after using a service or product (lee, 2009). The perception data were collected at the end of a trip (khan, 2003). Therefore, the SERVPERF model is said to consider performance attributes of Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model (Bouranta & et al, 2009). According to Ko (2005) in cases where technical measurements of the services or products received by the tourists is difficult to obtain, tourist perception can serve as a valuable tool to assess the quality of services or products. A perception study (SERVPERF) is argued to be relatively easy to conduct , as opposed to a service gap study (SERVQUAL) that involves data collection before the tourists leave for their trips (tourist expectation) and after the tourists complete the trips (tourist perception) (Yusof et a., 2010 and khan, 2003) . Unlike the SERVQUAL model, which faced much criticism because of its use of expectations in measuring service quality(v,1993), the SERVPERF model is argued to capable of explaining higher variances (Cronin & Taylor ,1992) and yielding better results (Asubonteng & et al,1996)

**tAble (1)Examples of application of the SEVPERF scale in leisure, tourism and hospitality**

Lee, Haksik, Yongki Lee, and Yoo (2000)	entertainment park	Modified SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF(15 items)
Soliman and Alzaid (2002)	Rihayds hotels	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Johns, Avci and. Karatepe (2004)	Travel Agents Northern Cyprus	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Hudson , Paul Hudson and Miller (2004)	Tour Operating Sector	SERVQUAL scale and SERVPERF
Qin & Prybutok,2008	Fast-Food Restaurants	Modified SERVPERF scale (21 items)
Mey and Badaruddin Mohamed (2010)	MUSEUM IN MALAYSIA	Modified SERVPERF scale (35items)

Krishnankutty and Kalita ,2011	Aviation Sector in Agartala	SERVPERF model
Aldehayyat (2011)	Jordanian Hotels	SERVPERF model
Abdullah, Tahir Jan , and Abd Manaf (2012)	IN AIRLINE INDUSTRY OF MALAYSIA	SERVPERF model
Ahmad, and Qadir (2013)	Kashmir tourism destination	SERVPERF model

*Source: based on literature review*

In light of the above discussion, and due to the criticized that faced SERVQUAL as previously explained, the current study employed SERVPERF scale to measure service quality to test its relationships with customer satisfaction and behaviour intention

### **Service quality and customer satisfaction**

One of the biggest contemporary challenges of management in service industries is providing and maintaining customer satisfaction. Service quality and customer satisfaction have increasingly been identified as key factors in the battle for competitive differentiation and customer retention.

Additionally, increased competition between leisure service businesses has force managers to place greater importance on understanding and satisfying their customers' requirements. Like other service industries, hospitality research is focusing on the relationship between customer satisfaction, and repeated sales. Customer satisfaction is one of the most important sources of competitive advantage and its accurate measurement is essential for the positioning or repositioning the service mix to meet customers' needs (Ispas & et al, 2010).

According to Spreng and Mackoy (1996), there is no clear definition of satisfaction, although most definitions would involve “an evaluative, affective or emotional response.” More specific, there are a number of approaches to define what customer satisfaction is. Zeithaml and Bitner (2000) describe it as “the customer’s evaluation of product or service in terms of whether that product or service has met their needs and expectations.” .Considering the travel industry, where the product offering addresses hedonistic (leisure) needs, so satisfaction is defined by Oliver (1997, 1999) “as pleasurable fulfillment.” Therefore, the overall experience of the tourist is

evaluated based on fulfillment of his/her needs, wants, desires and hopes. Consequently, “satisfaction is the tourist's sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure” (Moliner & at al., 2006 and Kobylanski, 2012).

The discrepancy between perceived service quality and satisfaction is important because managers need to know whether their objective is to provide the maximum level of perceived service quality or to have satisfied customers. The standard of comparison in forming satisfaction is predictive expectations, or what the consumer believes will happen. Perceived service quality is the result of a comparison of performance and what the consumer feels a firm should provide (Shonk, 2006). One of the widespread determinants of overall customer satisfaction is perceived quality (Fornell & et al., 1996).

In contrast to this idea to equate the two constructs, the idea that perceived service quality and customer satisfaction are distinctive constructs has later achieved some degree of consensus among researchers. According to this view, perceived service quality is evaluated by the actual performance of the service in terms of particular service attributes in the specific context, whereas customer satisfaction is assessed by the customers’ overall experience of the service (Oliver, 1997). Customer satisfaction thus depends on a variety of factors, including perceived service quality, customers’ mood, emotions, social interactions, and other experience-specific subjective factors (Oliver and Rust, 1994).

Satisfying the consumer in tourism is important for three main reasons (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). First it leads to positive word- of – mouth recommendation of the product to friends and relatives, which in turn brings in new customers. Second creating repeat customer by satisfying them with their first use of the product brings a steady source of income with no need for extra marketing expenditure. Third dealing with complaints is expensive, time consuming and bad for the organization’s reputation. Furthermore, it can bring direct costs through compensation payments (Abdalla, 2008)

In tourism industry, quality of consistent delivery and visitor services according to expected standards is become one of the major challenges for the destination management will be facing in the following years as it is a crucial condition for destinations’ success in the competitive and

emerging tourism industry. On other hand, service quality has become a great predictor to outcomes, such as customer satisfaction (Atilgan& et al., 2003). In destination marketing, tourist satisfaction is considered to be very important, as it is very influential in the choice of destinations, the consumption of products and services, and the tourists' decision to return (Kozak and Rimmington, 2002). Bowen and Clarke (2002) indicated that measurement between service qualities with tourist satisfactions allows destination management to fully understand how to provide the best possible service quality to satisfied tourists.

As indicated before service quality and customer satisfaction are different concepts, although they are closely related. According to some authors, satisfaction represents an antecedent of service quality (Carman, 1990; Bolton and Drew, 1991). In this sense, satisfactory experience may affect customer attitude and the assessment of perceived service quality. Thus, satisfaction with a specific transaction may result with positive global assessment of service quality. Other authors conflicts the previous approach and claimed that service quality is antecedent of customer satisfaction =-Oliver, 1997; Oh, 1999; Zeithaml and Bitner, 2000) This group of authors suggests that service quality is a cognitive evaluation, which may lead to satisfaction. Hence, customer satisfaction is the result of service quality ( Holjevac & et al , 2009). The current study adopted the latest point of view in which service quality as a process will cause customer satisfaction as an output.

A second debate within the literature relates to the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Satisfied customers tend to be loyal to the company and more likely to return (Greenwell et al., 2002).

In the tourism and recreation field, distinctions have been made between quality of opportunity or performance, and satisfaction or/and quality of experience. Crompton and Love (1995) in their discussion of the quality and satisfaction constructs in the context of tourism. Quality of performance, which may also be termed quality of opportunity, refers to the attributes of a service which are primarily controlled by a supplier. It is the output of a tourism provider. Evaluations of the quality of performance are based on tourists' perceptions of the performance of the provider. In contrast, satisfaction refers to an emotional state of mind after exposure to the opportunity. It recognizes that satisfaction may be influenced by the social-psychological state a tourist brings to a site (mood, disposition, needs) and by extraneous events (for example climate,

social group interactions) that are beyond the provider's control, as well as by the program or site attributes that suppliers can control. Thus, performance quality is conceptualized as a measure of a provider's output, whereas level of satisfaction is concerned with measuring a tourist's outcome. All else equal, higher quality performance in facility provision, programming, and service are likely in facility provision, programming, and service are likely to result in a higher level of visitor satisfaction. However, extraneous variables associated with factors outside the control of the provider make it likely that there will be a less than perfect correlation between the two measures.

Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003) believe there is agreement that service quality and tourist satisfaction are unique and different constructs. They strengthen their position by arguing that service quality contributes to overall satisfaction. It can therefore, be viewed as one of the factors that determine tourist satisfaction. Other factors are the experience, desired outcomes, perceptions, needs and desires. With the argument given above, it is clear that there is a need to clarify the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction in terms of differences and similarities in order to evaluate variables that contribute to tourist satisfaction. Tian-Cole and Crompton (2003) state that “service quality relates to quality of opportunities or performance of management, while satisfaction relates to the psychological outcome resulting from the experience, which is out of direct control of management.”

To sum up, the relationship between quality and satisfaction is complex. Some authors have described it as Siamese twins (Danaher and Mattsson, 1994). Although there still remain a lot of unresolved questions, it can be concluded that service quality and customer satisfaction can be perceived as separate concepts that have causal ordering (Holjevac & et al., 2009). Several studies have investigated the relationship of service quality with customer behavior patterns (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000; Dimitriades, 2006; Olorunniwo et al., 2006; Chi and Qu, 2008; Faullant et al., 2008). According to these findings, customer satisfaction increases customer loyalty, influences repurchase intentions and leads to positive word-of-mouth ( Holjevac & et al., 2009)

## **Customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions**

Ryu & Han (2010) show that there is significant relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Saha & Theingi (2009) state that behavioral intention is a customer's subjective chance of performing a certain behavior connected to behavioral aspects. Positive behavior supports organization's profitability and increases market share. A behavior intention is also found different between more and less satisfied customers (Soderlund, 1998). Positive behavior reduces the cost of marketing, and it may increase revenue if new customers are attracted (Riechheld & Sesser, 1990).

It seems reasonable that satisfaction has a positive influence on post purchase behaviour (Cronin & Taylor, 1992, Fornell, 1992; Keaveney, 1995; Oliver, 1980, , Jones & Suh, 2000). Appiah-Adu et al. (2000) stated that the greater satisfaction the more likely it is that the tourist will return to the destination and recommend it (Abdalla , 2007). However, other empirical studies have not confirmed such a direct relationship (Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000). In attempting to explain these conflicting findings, Rust and Zahorik (1993) suggested that a satisfied customer might change to an alternative destination with a view to increasing the present satisfaction level whereas a dissatisfied customer might remain with the existing destination because no better alternatives are available.

## **Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions**

The causal relationship among service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioural intention is of increasingly academic and management interests (Ladhari, 2009; & Ryu & Han, 2010). There is strong evidence in academic research that links service quality with behavioral intentions. Without controlling customer satisfaction. But in contrast, Ruy & Han (2010), Zeithmal *et al.* (1996) show customer satisfaction mediates between service quality and behavioral intention (Pandey & Joshi ,2010).

The primary motivation among tourism providers for investing effort in evaluating and improving their quality of performance and seeking to enhance level of satisfaction, is that such improvements will result in increased visitation and/or revenues. In tourism field similarly, in the marketing field few studies investigated these relationship between service quality with customer satisfaction and behavior intention in one model (Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman 1996), in which perceptions of high quality as found to be positively affected intended behavior. Gotlieb, Grewal and Brown (1994) added that, surprisingly, effects of perceived quality and satisfaction on behavioral intentions have seldom been examined when both variables are included in a model. These results inspire the need for further research on the relationship between service quality with customer satisfaction and behavior intention in one model.

### **Research framework and hypotheses :**

The aim of this section is to propose a conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between perceived service quality with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. A conceptual framework is a structure of concepts which are pulled together as a map for the study, (Liehr and Smith, 2009). A conceptual framework is a fundamental part of a quantitative research study as it explains the research questions or hypotheses (Collis and Hussey, 2003; Punch, 2005). The conceptual framework, basically, represents a movement from confusion to certainty (Dwivedi, 2008) and provides clarity, focus and simplicity to the research task (Punch, 2005). Moreover, it clears away all the issues and materials that are not germane to the research topic and question (Dwivedi, 2008), helps to make explicit what we already know and think about the research topic (Punch, 2005) and finally it provides structure and coherence to the researcher's dissertation (Dwivedi, 2008).

An extensive critical review of the previous studies that investigated the perceived service quality with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention has been conducted. This literature review has assisted in proposing a conceptual framework and hypotheses to serve the purpose of the current study, which investigates the causal relationship between perceived service quality - as an independent variable- with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention - as a dependent variable- as shown in figure 1.



Based on previous several studies such as those conducted by Athanassopoulos (2000) ; Baker & Crompton (2000); Chen, (2008); Chen & Tsai (2007); Cronin et al., (2000); Petrick & Backman (2002); Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman (1996), perceived service quality -as a multidimensional construct containing six dimension- is supposed to has positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioral intention.

More specific, tangibility dimension describes tangibles as “physical facilities, equipments, and staff appearance (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23), is supposed to have positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioral intention as following:

*Hypothesis 1: Tangibility has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 2: Tangibility has a positive effect on behavioural intention.*

Reliability dimension -of perceived service quality- describes reliability as “ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23). On other words, the ability involves performing the promised service dependably and accurately. It includes. Doing it right the first time, this is one of the most important service components for customers. Reliability also extends to provide services when promised and maintain error-free records. Reliability dimension is supposed to have positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention as following:

*Hypothesis 3: Reliability has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 4: Reliability has a positive effect on behavioural intention.*

Responsiveness dimension -of perceived service quality- describes responsiveness as “willingness to help customers and provide prompt service” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23). In other words, employees are willing to help customers and provide prompt service to customers such as quick service, professionalism in handling and recovering from mistakes. Responsiveness dimension is supposed to have positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioral intention as following:

*Hypothesis 5: Responsiveness has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 6: Responsiveness has a positive effect on behavioural intention.*

Assurance dimension -of perceived service quality- describes assurance as “knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23). In other words, assurance refers to the knowledge and courtesy of employees and

their ability to convey trust and confidence including competence, courtesy, credibility and security. Based on this, assurance dimension is supposed to have positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioral intention as following:

*Hypothesis 7: Assurance has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 8: Assurance has a positive effect on behavioural intention.*

Empathy -of perceived service quality- describes empathy as “caring, individual attention the firm provides its customers” (Parasuraman et al., 1988, p.23). In other words empathy refers to the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers including access, communication and understanding the customers. Based on this, empathy dimension is supposed to have positive relationship with customer satisfaction and behavioural intention as following:

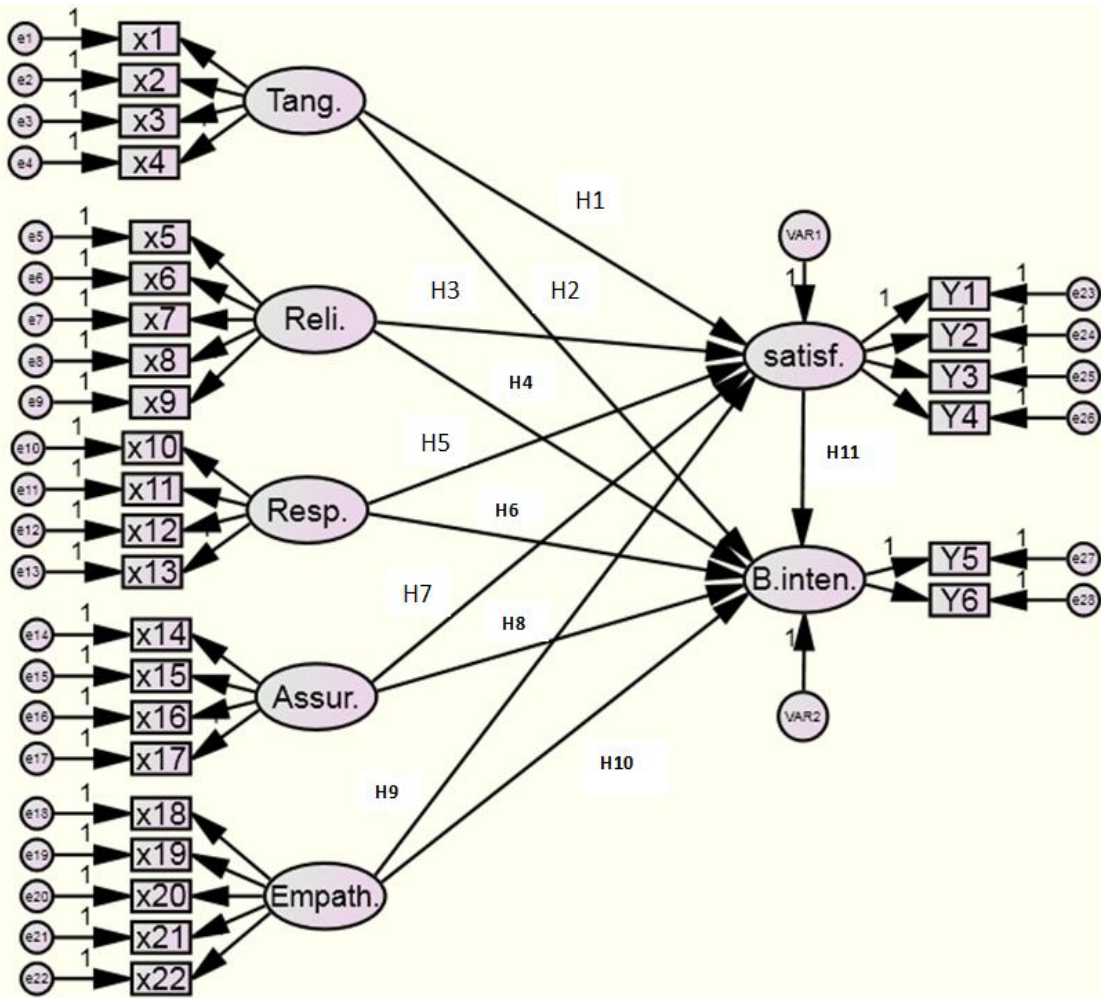
*Hypothesis 9: Empathy has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.*

*Hypothesis 10: Empathy has a positive effect on behavioural intention.*

Finally customer satisfaction regarding accommodation, food & beverages, transportation and attraction is supposed to have positive relationship with behavioural intention to return to Egypt or recommends Egypt to others as following:

*Hypothesis 11: customer satisfaction has a positive effect on behaviour intention.*

FIGURE (1): RESEARCH FRAME WORK



## METHODOLOGY

The current study adopts the positivist philosophy because: (1) this study aims to evaluate tourism service quality with regard to customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. The relationship has been previously investigated in the literature; however, the findings of these empirical studies are ambiguous and even contradictory, which may be a motivator to further testing these relationships and improve our understanding of these relationships. Accordingly,

the positivist philosophy is more suitable to use in this situation since, this philosophy is used when theory is available, variables can be easily identified and the studies are “highly structured” (Creswell, 1994); (2) According to the research objectives, this research attempts to study the causal relationship between tourism service quality with customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. This can be accomplished by using the positivist paradigm. Collis and Hussey (2003, 53) contend that “according to positivists paradigm....explanation consists of establishing causal relationships between the variables by establishing causal laws and linking them to a deductive or integrated theory.

Additionally, the current study adopted the deductive approach for the following reasons: (1), the deductive approach related more to the positivist philosophy (Saunders et al., 2007) which has been preferred as the current research philosophy. (2), the research hypotheses are derived from the proposed conceptual framework that explained the relationship between tourism service quality with customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. Additionally, quantitative data is collected to examine these hypotheses and test the identified outcomes. Accordingly, these steps in fact fit only the deductive approach (Creswell, 2003; and Saunders et al. 2007).

The researcher uses the two methods of data collection. Secondary methods were employed through searching in several database sources to complete the current study literature

Regarding primary methods, several methods can be employed, depending on the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2003). For the current study, the data were collected through using a self-administered questionnaire. A questionnaire is “a set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to a group of people in order to collect data about some topic(s) in which the researcher is interested” (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). This method of data collection is used because it fits the current study philosophy (positivism), and approach (deductive). It also can enable the researcher to collect a large amount of data from a sizeable population in a highly economic way (Saunders et al., 2003; Sapsford and Jupp, 2006).

The current study target population is the entire British tourist that visited Egypt before. However, the findings of the current study can be generalized to a wider population (all

European tourists) because they all supposed to have similar cultures and traditions. The term sampling refers to “the methods that researchers use to select the groups, objects, or phenomena that they actually observe (Thyer, 2001:41).

Taking into consideration the large numbers of British tourist visiting Egypt annually (around 1.034.000 for 2011) (Egyptian Ministry of Tourism, 2011).

### **Data analysis techniques**

The quantitative data was analysed through three continuous stages of analysis: (1) preliminary analysis (screening data prior to analysis), (2) descriptive analysis, and (3) multivariate analysis. Preliminary analysis (aims at establishing/testing necessary conditions prior to multivariate analysis) investigated some issues such as addressing missing data, dealing with outliers, test of normality, multicollinearity, and linearity. Preliminary analysis also included sample size and sample bias to measure the differences between groups or variables (e.g. T-test). The next stage was concerned with some descriptive analysis, which included some dispersion measures; and some information regarding the distribution of scores. Furthermore, multivariate analyses using structural equation modelling was used to investigate the direct and indirect effects between the variables of the study’s proposed model.

## **Results & discussions:**

### **Structural equation modeling :**

To assess the structural model goodness of model fit (GOF), several measures were employed such as measures of absolute fit:  $\chi^2/df$ , standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA); measures of incremental fit: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), and Tucker Lewis Index TLI; and measure of parsimony fit : Parsimony Comparative Fit Index (PCFI) and Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI) (Hair et al., 2006, and Byrne, 2006). Table (2) and figure(1) presents the information on selected fit indices from the output used in the evaluation of the structural model. Table(1) and figure(1) confirms that the model fit the data well.

**Table2 : Summary of model fit indices for the proposed research model**

Research model	Obtained fit indices							
	AFM			IFM			PFM	
	<i>CMIN/df</i>	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	NFI	TLI	PNFI	PCFI
	1.53	0.029	0.028	0.943	0.925	0.912	0.808	0.812
Suggested fit indices								
	≤ 3	≤ 0.08	<0.05	≥0.90	≥0.90	≥0.90	> 0.5	> 0.5

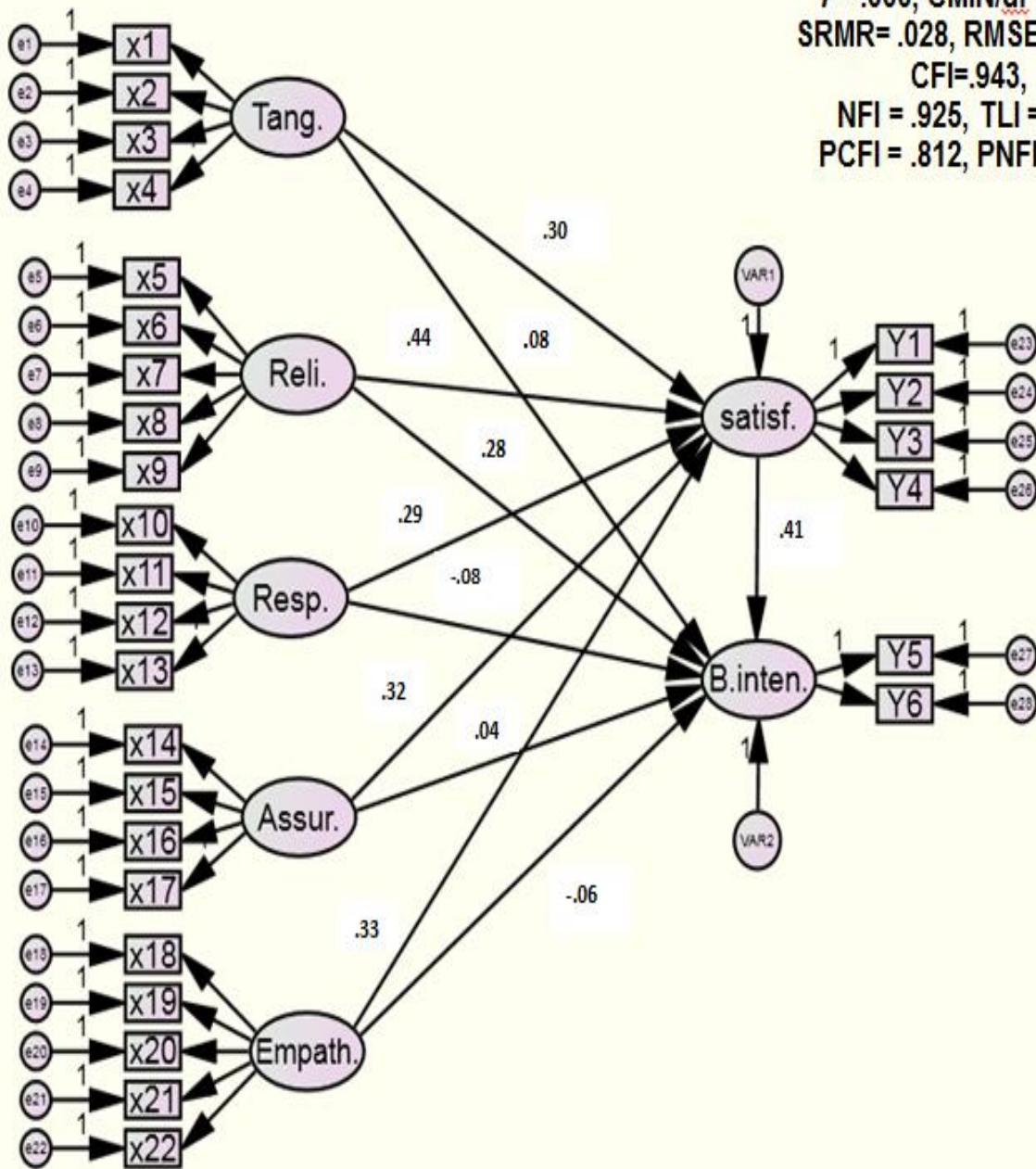
Suggestion for indices were adapted from literature: (Byrne, 2006; Hair et al., 2006; Raykov and Marcoulides, 2006; and Tabachnic and Fidell , 2007)

### 4.3.2.1 Hypothesis testing and discussion

After obtaining a satisfactory model fit, research hypotheses were tested. Each path in the structural model between the latent variables represents a specific hypothesis (see Figure1). According to the proposed research model, there are eleven hypotheses representing the proposed relationships among research variables. Structural equation model using AMOS v17 was employed to test the null hypothesis (estimate equals zero) of these relationships (between the latent factors) as shown in Figure1. Those relationships investigate the direct and indirect relationships between service quality dimensions with customer satisfaction and behavior intention.

Figure 2: structural and measurement model

$\chi^2(366, N=390)=559.98$ ,  
 $P=.000$ ,  $CMIN/df = 1.53$ ,  
 $SRMR = .028$ ,  $RMSEA = .029$ ,  
 $CFI = .943$ ,  
 $NFI = .925$ ,  $TLI = .912$ ,  
 $PCFI = .812$ ,  $PNFI = .808$



**Table (3): Hypothesised relationships, Standardised Regression Weights, P-values, and null hypotheses supported/rejected**

	Hypothesised Relationships	Standardised estimate	S.E.	C.R. (T-value)	P	Null hypothesis (estimate equals zero)	interpretation
H1	Satis. <---- Tang.	.307	.030	5.256	***	Rejected	Tang. has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction (effect size = .307 )
H2	B.Inten. <---- Tang.	.080	.078	1.196	.232	Fail to Reject	The positive direct effect of Tang. on behaviour intention is not supported at probability level (P) <.05 (e.g. t-value < .196)
H3	Satis. <---- Reli.	.441	.039	6.088	***	Rejected	Reli. has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction (effect size = .441 )
H4	B.Inten. <---- Reli.	.285	.106	3.291	***	Rejected	Reli. has a positive direct effect on behaviour intention (effect size = .285 )
H5	Satis. <---- Resp.	.292	.029	4.841	***	Rejected	Resp. has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction (effect size = .292)
H6	B.Inten. <---- Resp.	-.085	.076	-1.233	.217	Fail to Reject	The positive direct effect of Resp. on behaviour intention is not supported at probability level (P) <.05 (e.g. t-value < .196)
H7	Satis. <---- Assur.	.325	.028	5.360	***	Rejected	Assur. has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction (effect size = .325)
H8	B.Inten. <---- Assur.	.043	.075	.609	.542	Fail to Reject	The positive direct effect of Assur. on behaviour intention is not supported at probability level (P) <.05 (e.g. t-value < .196)
H9	Satis. <---- Empath.	.330	.038	4.764	***	Rejected	Empath. has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction (effect size = .330)
H10	B.Inten. <---- Empath.	-.061	.098	-.767	.443	Fail to Reject	The positive direct effect of Empath. on behaviour intention is not supported at probability level (P) <.05 (e.g. t-value < .196)
H11	B.Inten. <---- Satis.	.419	.227	4.179	***	Rejected	Customer satisfaction. has a positive direct effect on behaviour intention (effect size = .419)

\*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level; \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level;; Tang.: Tangibility; Satis.: Customer Satisfaction; Reli.: Reliability; Assur. : Assurance; Resp.: Responsiveness; Empath.: Empathy; B.Inten.: Behavior Intention; S.E.: standard error; C.R.: critical ratio



Table 3 presents selected output from AMOS v17 showing the hypotheses, standardized (estimates) regression weights, standard error, critical ratio, the p-value, null hypothesis estimation and interpretation.

According to table, the results of the SEM show positive standardized parameter estimates and significant p value for the impact of tangibility on customer satisfaction (path coefficient=0.30,  $P < .001$ ). This result might confirm that tangibility (physical facilities, equipments, and staff appearance) can improve customer satisfaction. These results are consistent with those reported by Harr (2008), and Nadiri (2008). While the positive significant direct effect of tangibility on behavior intention is not supported (path coefficient=0.080) at probability level ( $P < .05$ ). This result indicates that tangibility (physical facilities, equipments, and staff appearance) cannot directly convince tourists to visit Egypt again or recommend other to visit Egypt (behavior intention) but can only effect behavior intention indirectly through satisfying customer first.

The findings of SEM, also, show positive standardized parameter estimates and significant p value for the impact of reliability on customer satisfaction (path coefficient=0.44,  $P < .001$ ); and behavior intention (path coefficient=0.28,  $P < .001$ ). These results confirms that the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (reliability dimension of perceived service quality) can not only satisfy customers (tourists) (overall satisfaction regarding accommodation, food beverages, attraction, and price) but also can impact directly the behavior intent to revisit Egypt or recommend visiting Egypt to others. These results are consistent with those reported by Juwaheer and Ross (2003), Sriyam (2010), and Pandey & Joshi,(2010); and Agbor (2011).

The results of the SEM, also, provide evidence of positive standardized parameter estimates and significant p value for the impact of responsiveness on customer satisfaction (path coefficient=0.29,  $P < .001$ ). These results confirm that customers (tourists) are satisfied when employees are willing to help them and provide prompt service such as quick service, professionalism in handling and recovering from mistakes (responsiveness dimension of perceived service quality). These results are consistent with those reported by Jun & Cai (2001); Diaz & Ruiz (2002); Joseph et al., (2005); Glaveli et al., (2006); Sriyam (2010); and Kheng, & et al., (2010).

While, the positive significant direct effect of responsiveness on behavior intention is not supported (path coefficient= -0.085) at probability level ( $P < .05$ ). These results confirm that responsiveness dimension of service quality cannot directly convince tourists to visit Egypt again or recommend other to visit Egypt (behavior intention) but can only effect behavior intention indirectly through customer satisfaction.

The path coefficient between assurance (dimension of perceived service quality) and customer satisfaction is 0.34 with a high significance P-value ( $P < 0.001$ ). This highly significant ( $P < 0.001$ ) path coefficient provide an evidence to reject the null hypothesis (no relationship exists) and indicates that assurance has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction. This results provide an evidence that the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence including competence, courtesy, credibility and security, can directly lead to customer satisfaction, These results are consistent with those reported by Ndubisi (2006); Kheng, & et al., (2010); and Canny (2013) .

While the SEM results show that assurance cannot directly convince tourists to visit Egypt again or recommend other to visit Egypt (behavior intention) (path coefficient=0.043,  $P=0.54$ ) but can only effect behavior intention indirectly through customer satisfaction

Additionally, SEM results show that the path coefficient between empathy (dimension of perceived service quality) and customer satisfaction is 0.33 with a high significance P-value ( $P < 0.001$ ). This highly significant ( $P < 0.001$ ) path coefficient provide an evidence to reject the null hypothesis (no relationship exists) and indicates that empathy has a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction. This results provide an evidence that the provision of caring and individualized attention to customers including access, communication and understanding the customers, can directly lead to customer satisfaction, These results are consistent with those reported by Nadiri et al. (2008); and Suki (2014). While the SEM results show that empathy cannot directly convince tourists to visit Egypt again or recommend other to visit Egypt (behavior intention) (path coefficient=-0.061,  $P=0.54$ ) but can only effect behavior intention indirectly through customer satisfaction.

Finally, SEM results show that the path coefficient between customer satisfaction and behavior intention is 0.419 with a high significance P-value ( $P < 0.001$ ). This highly significant ( $P < 0.001$ ) path coefficient provide an evidence to reject the null hypothesis (no relationship exists) and indicates that customer satisfaction have a positive significant direct impact on behavior intention. This results provide an evidence that when tourists are satisfies with accommodation, food beverages, attraction, and price, they are likely to repeat visit and recommend visiting Egypt to others (behavior intention). These results are consistent with those reported by Cronin et al., (2000); and Olorunniwo et al.,(2006).

Finally, the assessment of the predictive power of the SEM results revealed that  $R^2$  for the endogenous variables are as follows: customer satisfaction (0.60), and behavior intention (0.38),

The results of the SEM predictive power indicate that the five perceived dimension of service quality (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) can explain 60% of

the variance in customer satisfaction and 38% of the variance in behavior intention. These  $R^2$  values indicates good predictive power, taking into consideration the substantial unexplained variance in customer satisfaction and behavior intention, which would probably be explained by other factors including destination image, perceived value, management, safety, stability of political and economic factors.

### **Conclusions :**

This study sought to investigate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and behaviour intention. Despite the important theoretical role of service quality in improving customer satisfaction and creating behavior intention, fewer empirical studies have been investigated these three constructs in one model within the context of the service industry, and in particular there is an absence in the tourism industry. Among those studies that investigate the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and creating behavior intention, there is a lack of clarity concerning the dimensional structure of service quality, which service quality can improve customer satisfaction and create behavior intention, and whether the relationship between service quality and behavior intention is direct or indirect through customer satisfaction. This lack of clarity might be due to difference in the dimensions that were used to measure service quality, and/or difference in the employed data analysis methods.

The current study started by reviewing the literature to highlights the different definitions of service quality, Additionally, an extensive review of the literature was done regarding the dimensions and measurements of the service quality construct including the SERVQUAL model and the criticisms of the SERVQUAL questionnaire because it consists of 44 questions to measure customer expectations and perceptions. This may result in respondent fatigue; additionally the method of asking respondents was questionable. Specifically, a problem might occur from some respondents who might be unable to establish the expectation due to a new experience or no communication with other sources. The extension of arguments over the SERVQUAL provided more insights into the evaluation of service quality (Narangajavana, 2007).

Moreover, in SERVQUAL, respondents must rate their expectations and perceptions of a particular service on the same scale for each of 22 items. Moreover, respondents are often

interviewed only once and questioned to rate both their expectations and perceptions on one occasion. If respondents are using these retrospective expectations in their post-purchase evaluations, the initially measured expectations are disputable by biased experience of the respondents (Baron and Harris, 2003). Because of these several authors suggested and preferred the use of only perception of service performance to measure service quality (Narangajavana, 2007 and Zhang, 2009). For more consistent results, several authors recommended using service performance “SERVPERF” -a modified SERVQUAL instrument- to measure service quality. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman et.al., 1988) include the physical facilities, equipment and the appearance of the staff (Tangibles); the dependability and accuracy of the service provider (Reliability); the ability to know and willingness to cater to customer needs (Responsiveness); the ability of staff to instill confidence and trust in the company (Assurance); and finally, the ability of the staff in providing a caring service to customers (Empathy). Instead of measuring both customer expectations and perceptions as in the SERVQUAL, the SERVPERF was operationalized by only one part of the perceived performance. Based on the above the SERVPERF scale was used in the current study to operationalize (measure) service quality.

A conceptual framework was then developed, based on an extensive review of the previous studies, to illustrate the interrelations between the five dimensions of service quality and their impact on customer satisfaction and behavior intention, so the reader can understand the theorized relationships between these three variables. This conceptual framework guided the research, determining what variables would be measured and the statistical relationship that should be tested. In chapter three a background of British tourist’s market was highlighted.

In this study, 550 questionnaires were distributed in most of the international Egyptian airports (Cairo airport, Alexandria airport, Borg Alarab airport, Hurghda airport, Sharm - Al Shekh airport, Alok sor airport, and Aswan airport) targeting the departure British tourists, around 450 questionnaires returned of which 60 questionnaires were excluded due to an excessive number of unanswered questions, leaving a final usable total of 390, yielding a response rate of 71%.

The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and behavior intention was tested using structural equation modelling (SEM). SEM is appropriate technique that serves the purpose of the current study as it allows analysing multiple and interrelated causal relationships among the latent constructs while taking into account the estimated measurement error. The SEM results indicate that the entire five service quality dimension: tangibility (path coefficient=0.30,  $P < .001$ ), reliability (path coefficient=0.44,  $P < .001$ ), responsiveness (path coefficient=0.29,  $P < .001$ ), assurance (path coefficient=0.32,  $P < .001$ ), and empathy (path coefficient=0.33,  $P < .001$ ) directly improve customer satisfaction, while only one dimension of the service quality dimensions can create behavior intention which is reliability (path coefficient=0.28,  $P < .001$ ), but the other service quality dimensions such as tangibility (path coefficient=0.07,  $P = .23$ ), responsiveness (path coefficient=-0.08,  $P = .21$ ), assurance (path coefficient=0.04,  $P = .54$ ), and empathy (path coefficient=-0.06,  $P = .44$ ) cannot directly create behavior intention but can indirectly through customer satisfaction the path coefficient of the impact of customer satisfaction on behaviour intention is 0.41, with probability level  $P < .001$ .

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