Service Quality in The Public Service: A Combination of SERVQUAL and Importance-Performance Analysis

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

This study aims to measure the quality of service obtained at The Provincial Office of the Indonesian FDA in Jakarta (BBPOM in Jakarta) through a survey with Front-Liner Employees (FLE) and customer perceptions of service quality. The study examines how closely customer service expectations match Front-Liner Employees' perceptions use SERVQUAL. The survey elicits customers' expectations of excellent public service and compares them to their perceptions of BBPOM in Jakarta. Additionally, the paper discusses a parallel SERVQUAL survey conducted on Front-Liner Employees, how effectively they understand their consumers' needs and how well their internal processes support the delivery of excellent public services. The findings reveal that there is a gap exists in meeting customer expectations. Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is a tool to decide the priority scale for each existing attribute's improvement efforts and the priority scale for current improvements. Based on the IPA of the discrepancy between customer expectations and employees' perceptions, attributes of tangibles dimension (T1, T2, and T3) are essential flaws that require immediate improvement. While the gap between customer expectations and their perception of the service obtained in IPA, attributes T1, RP4 and A1 need immediate improvement.

Keywords: Customer Expectation, Front-Liner Employees, Importance-Performance Analysis, Public Service, Service Quality, SERVQUAL

JEL Classification: D73, H11, H70

INTRODUCTION

Customer satisfaction is a requirement in both the private and public sectors. Public sector employees are responsible to the community or its customers to ensure public satisfaction. Consumer satisfaction is a critical component in determining consumer behavioral intentions. (Ardani et al.,2019). According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003), numerous factors contribute to customer satisfaction: service quality. Hamer (2006) advised practitioners that service performance should exceed consumers' expectations. The difference between expectations and perceived service quality (PSQ) is associated with consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Customer expectations are increasing for public sector organizations to provide excellent service and increase efficiency (Randall and Senior, 1994). According to Maladi et al. (2019), service quality substantially affects customer satisfaction and retention. Corporate image affects customer satisfaction.

Public services are the services provided by the government (or its agencies) to those residing within its jurisdiction. Unlike their private-sector counterparts, public service delivery is mandated to ensure universal access, which is frequently associated with citizens' fundamental rights; as a result, the service context is markedly different (Van de Walle, 2016). Public services must cater to all segments and provide value propositions to various stakeholders, not just users, doing them a complex service (Osborne et al., 2013). Customers' personal needs, communications, and expected services (expected service) are all influenced by a company's marketing communications activities. Meanwhile, the services perceived by customers (the perceived service) result from a series of internal company decisions and actions (Angmalisang, 2019).

Customer wants, and expectations are shifting when it comes to government services and their quality criteria. Service quality processes in public sector organizations are delayed and hampered by the difficulties of quantifying results, intense press and public supervision, limited improvisation, and the requirement that decisions be based on regulation (Teicher et al.,2002). Furthermore, profit is not the primary objective of public organizations, as they serve various functions, including facilitation, rapid response, and socioeconomic development (Agus et al., 2007).

The research employs the SERVQUAL model framework to explore the discrepancy between customers' general service expectations and their perceptions of the services received from BBPOM in Jakarta. To evaluate the implementation of the service quality concept and verify differences between customer service expectations and customer perceptions of Front-Liner Employees (FLE). The difference between perceived performance and expectations can be used to proxy for perceived service quality, and SERVQUAL is expected to measure it accurately. However, perceived service quality can be managed by treating employees well.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An organization's ability to meet or exceed customer expectations is characterized as service quality. It is the distinction between the service that a customer expects and perceives. (Parasuraman et al.,1988). Customer expectations are compared to their impressions of the services given by the service provider to evaluate perceived service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1990). When expectations outweigh performance, perceived quality suffers, resulting in customer dissatisfaction (Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) assume that employees who have direct contact with consumers represent the organization and directly impact customer satisfaction. Customers create strong impressions about an organization's quality of service based

on their encounters with Front-Liner Employees, which is why Front-Liner Employees' input is critical for service improvement.

The SERVQUAL Model
According to the SERVQUAL model, customers evaluate a service's quality along five distinct dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Zeithaml et al.,1990) as follows:
1. Reliability is the ability to carry out services according to standards accurately and reliably, promised promptly, accurately, and satisfactorily.
2. Responsiveness is the ability and willingness of the provider to assist consumers and deliver prompt service.
3. Assurance is the knowledge and courtesy of service providers and their ability to be trusted and reassuring.
4. Empathy is caring for customers, giving concern, including ease of relationship, good communication, and understanding customer needs.
5. Tangible is the physical presentation of facilities, personnel, apparatus, and communication materials.

According to Zeithaml et al. (1990), four factors that affect customer expectations are word of mouth, personal needs, prior experience, and external communications. A gap is formed when the customer's perceptions of the accepted service differ from their expectations.

Parasuraman et al. (1985) suggested a model for service quality measurement according to the disconfirmation model by measuring the mismatch between perception and expected service. This exploratory study identified five gaps between expectation and perception of service quality. Luk and Layton (2002) extended Parasuraman et al. (1985) traditional GAP model by adding two additional gaps, as shown in Figure 1. They believe that employees are also independently involved in the measurement process of managers and include employees' perceptions of consumer expectations and discovered a discrepancy between them and employees' perceptions of customer expectations. The second gap was added when the distinction between employees and management's understanding of consumer expectations became obvious.

Figure 1. Extended Model of Service Quality Gaps
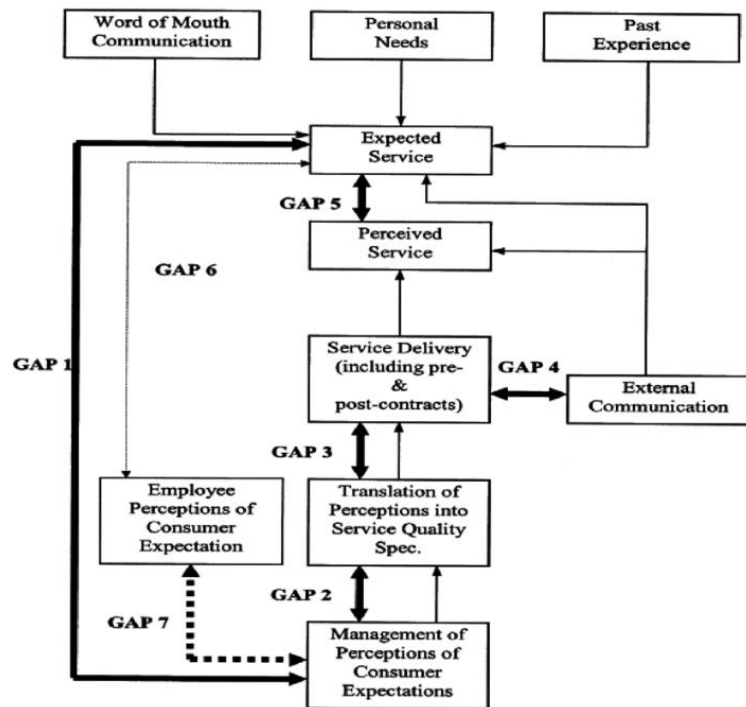
The three essential gaps, which are more associated with the external customers are Gap 1, Gap 5, and Gap 6; since they have a direct relationship with customers (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Luk and Layton, 2002), described as follow:

- Gap 1: The gap between customer expectation and management perception occurs when management or a service provider misperceives what the customer requires.
- Gap 2: The gap between management perceptions of service quality and specifications occurs when management or a service provider demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of customer preferences but fails to establish performance standards.
- Gap 3: The gap between service quality specifications and delivery, this chasm may occur in situations involving service personnel. It might arise due to insufficient training, inability, or unwillingness to adhere to defined service standards.
- Gap 4: The discrepancy between service performance and external communication: Company representatives' remarks and marketing significantly impact When these presumed expectations are not realized during the service's delivery, a gap occurs.
- Gap 5: When a consumer misinterprets the service's quality, the gap between expected and experienced service occurs.
- Gap 6: The gap between customer expectations and employee perceptions is caused by inconsistencies in Front-Liner Employees' comprehension of customer demands.
- Gap7: The divergence between employee and management perceptions; this exists as a result of differing perspectives on consumer expectations.

The Importance-Performance Analysis
Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) is an approach for evaluating customer satisfaction with a product or service offered by an organization. It was used to ascertain client wants and wishes to design strategies to meet those needs and goals. As a result,

IPA measures customer satisfaction based on two product or service attribute dimensions: the product or service's relevance to the customer and the organization's performance in providing that product or service (Martilla and James, 1977).

Figure 2. Importance-Performance Analysis Matrix
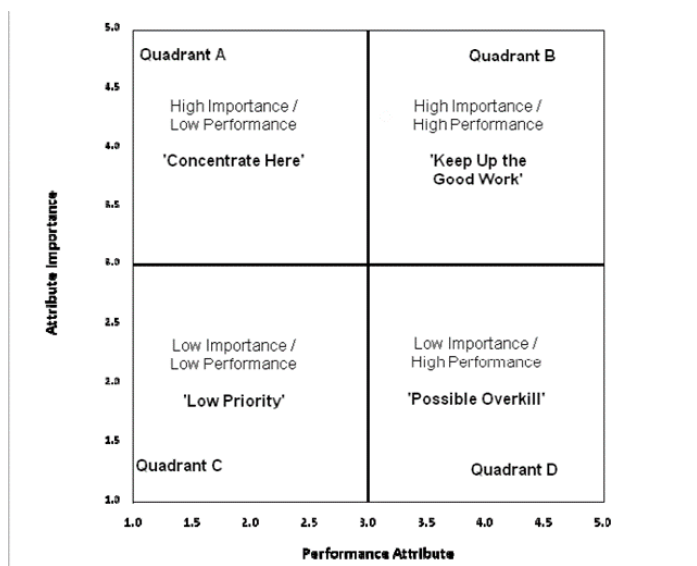
RESEARCH METHOD

Gaps 5 and 6 from the service quality model are used in this investigation. The poll was administered to these two distinct respondents, who had an opposed perception of service quality. This study's questionnaire was broken into two sections: Part A asked respondents about their demographic characteristics, such as gender, educational attainment, and age. Part B contained respondents' expectations (E) and perceptions (P) on five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The questionnaire contained 20 queries with five Likert scale items, and Respondents were asked to score their expectations and perceptions of the public service on various dimensions.

The distribution of the survey was carried out in the second and third week of November 2021 during the implementation of technical guidance with Food MSME business actors and obtained 58 data that can be used for this research from a target of 65 business actors, so that a response rate of 85% was obtained. The Front-Liner Employees are given the same questionnaire as customers to fill out individually. Of the 36 layoffs, 30 returned a questionnaire whose data could be used, resulting in a response rate of 83%. The quantitative research method utilizes statistical calculation processes to analyze responses using IBM SPSS 25.

RESULTS

The survey findings showed that the sample of customers consisted of 55,2% of females and 44,8% of males. 34,5 percent of responders were aged 41-50. Around 53.4 percent have a bachelor's degree. The FLE sample revealed an 86.7 percent female to 13.3 percent male gender distribution. According to age, the most significant number of respondents (33.3 percent) were between 31 and 40, followed by those under 30. When asked about their education level, 80 percent of respondents stated that they held a bachelor's degree, and 56.7 percent indicated that they had worked for more than ten years.

The Cronbach alpha value was used to determine the reliability of each dimension, which included data on perceptions, expectations, and discrepancies in perceptions and expectations. The reliability ratings for consumers and workers of the public service department are summarized in Table 1. Thus, the SERVQUAL instrument is appropriate for use in public services; a Cronbach alpha of 0.6-0.7 suggests an acceptable degree of dependability, while 0.8 or above indicates a very good level of reliability. A number greater than 0.95, on the other hand, is not always desirable because it may imply redundancy (Hulin et al., 2001). Additionally, Nunnally (1994) states that a reliability coefficient range of 0.5 to 0.6 is sufficient for a descriptive investigation. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.751 to 0.975 for consumers and 0.636 to 0.955 for FLE satisfy the minimum level of reliability necessary. As a result, the Cronbach coefficient reflects the reliability of this measure.

SERVQUAL Evaluation
In Table 2, the gap scores indicate the degree of agreement between the customer and Front-Liner Employees about each service quality aspect. They provide mean ratings, appropriate standard deviations, and t-test findings reflecting the degree of understanding for each attribute between customers and Front-Liner Employees. The gap score is calculated by subtracting each point's expected and perceived values. The hostile service quality gap suggests that clients have higher expectations than the service provided meets those expectations. A positive service quality gap emerges when customer perceptions exceed customer expectations. This study's 80% service quality disparity is negative and statistically significant at the 5% level.

Table 1. SERVQUAL's Dimension's Reliability for Customers and Front-Liner Employees

Dimension	Customers			Front-Liner Employee (FLE)		
	Perception (P)	Expectation (E)	Gap (P-E)	Perception (P)	Expectation (E)	Gap (P-E)
Tangibles	0,838	0,904	0,787	0,804	0,951	0,757
Reliability	0,923	0,961	0,784	0,813	0,891	0,636
Responsiveness	0,8	0,857	0,76	0,878	0,832	0,882
Assurance	0,879	0,954	0,751	0,845	0,857	0,792
Empathy	0,91	0,909	0,797	0,847	0,777	0,742
Overall (20 items)	0,954	0,975	0,907	0,946	0,955	0,91

From table 2, the average difference between consumer perceptions and expectations is the greatest from "Provide service when promised" and "Offer prompt service to clients" are attributes. The customer perceived a discrepancy in these traits of -0,172, the largest of all attributes. The next gap existed in attributes "Modern equipment" and "Inform customers when service will be performed."

On the other hand, the results in the employee group are different from the customer. They indicated that the most significant gap was observed in the attribute "Modern equipment," followed with "Physical facilities are visually appealing," and the third largest gaps were observed in two attributes "Employee are well dressed and neat in appearance" and "Dependability in handling customers' service problem."

Table 2. Gaps between Perceptions and Expectations (P – E) for Customers and Front-Liner Employee

Statements	Customers' Gap Scores			FLE's Gap Scores		
	Mean	Std Deviation	t-value	Mean	Std Deviation	t-value
Tangibles						
Modern equipment	-0,155	0,670	-1,763	-0,633	0,556	-6,238
Physical facilities are visually appealing	-0,017	0,662	-0,198	-0,566	0,728	-4,264
Employee are well dressed and neat in appearance	-0,017	0,396	-0,331	-0,500	0,629	-4,349
Visually appealing materials associated with service	0,000	0,375	0,000	-0,333	0,547	-3,340
Reliability						
Dependability in handling customers' service problem	-0,034	0,458	-0,574	-0,500	0,572	-4,785
Performs the service right the first time	0,034	0,373	0,704	-0,266	0,521	-2,804
Provides services at the time promised	-0,172	0,566	-2,319	-0,333	0,547	-3,340
Maintain error-free records	-0,086	0,470	-1,398	-0,400	0,498	-4,397
Responsiveness						
Inform customers when service will be performed	-0,155	0,745	-1,587	-0,300	0,535	-3,071
Offer prompt service to customers	-0,172	0,652	-2,012	-0,166	0,461	-1,980
Willingness to help customers	-0,103	0,406	-1,942	-0,133	0,434	-1,682
Readiness respond to customers' enquiries	-0,068	0,413	-1,272	-0,333	0,547	-3,340
Assurance						
Employee able to instill confidence in customers	-0,086	0,470	-1,398	-0,233	0,504	-2,536
Making customers feel safe in their transaction	-0,068	0,368	-1,427	-0,200	0,484	-2,262
Employee are courteous at all times	0,000	0,375	0,000	-0,333	0,479	-3,808
Have knowledge to answer customers' question	-0,034	0,373	-0,704	-0,133	0,346	-2,112
Empathy						
Have convenient business hours	0,034	0,458	0,574	0,433	0,626	3,791
Giving customers individual attention	-0,068	0,558	-0,942	-0,066	0,450	-0,812
Employee have customers best interest at heart	-0,034	0,529	-0,497	-0,166	0,592	-1,542
Employee understanding customers' needs	-0,017	0,439	-0,299	-0,133	0,434	-1,980

Values of Gap 5 and Gap 6 for each element/attribute of each dimension can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Calculation Result of Gap 5 and Gap 6

Var.	SERVQUAL VALUE FOR GAP 5			SERVQUAL VALUE FOR GAP 6		
	Average Perception of Customer	Average Expectation of Customer	Gap Value	Average Perception of FLE	Average Expectation of Customer	Gap Value
T1	4,397	4,552	-0,155	4,200	4,552	-0,352
T2	4,603	4,621	-0,018	4,267	4,621	-0,354
T3	4,638	4,655	-0,017	4,233	4,655	-0,422
T4	4,621	4,621	0,000	4,433	4,621	-0,188
RL1	4,448	4,483	-0,035	4,300	4,483	-0,183
RL2	4,500	4,466	0,034	4,400	4,466	-0,066
RL3	4,276	4,448	-0,172	4,333	4,448	-0,115
RL4	4,345	4,431	-0,086	4,267	4,431	-0,164
RP1	4,276	4,431	-0,155	4,467	4,431	0,036
RP2	4,293	4,466	-0,173	4,233	4,466	-0,233
RP3	4,552	4,655	-0,103	4,567	4,655	-0,088
RP4	4,466	4,534	-0,068	4,633	4,534	0,099
A1	4,448	4,534	-0,086	4,433	4,534	-0,101
A2	4,379	4,448	-0,069	4,567	4,448	0,119
A3	4,672	4,672	0,000	4,667	4,672	-0,005
A4	4,569	4,603	-0,034	4,500	4,603	-0,103
E1	4,483	4,448	0,035	4,600	4,448	0,152
E2	4,431	4,500	-0,069	4,133	4,500	-0,367
E3	4,534	4,569	-0,035	4,500	4,569	-0,069
E4	4,466	4,483	-0,017	4,367	4,483	-0,116
			-0,061			-0,126

Based on Table 3, for Gap 5, 18 of the 20 (90%) attributes have negative values, and for Gap 6, 16 of the 20 (80%) attributes also have a negative value. It means that the attribute does not meet customer expectations. From these data, further analysis is needed to determine the priority scale in improvement efforts of each existing attribute, and the priority scale current improvements are using the Importance-Performance Analysis method.

Martilla and James first suggested this technique in 1977 in their Journal of Marketing paper "Importance Performance Analysis." Respondents evaluate the significance and performance of a business using this technique. The average value of the significance and performance levels are then assessed using the Importance Performance Matrix, where the x-axis represents perception, and the y-axis reflects expectations. Later, the outcome will take the form of four quadrants (Tjiptono, 2011).

Figures 3 and 4 describe the Importance Performance Analysis for Gap 5 and 6. The location of the attributes, which are a description of the perception and expectation assessment, are summarized in Table 4.

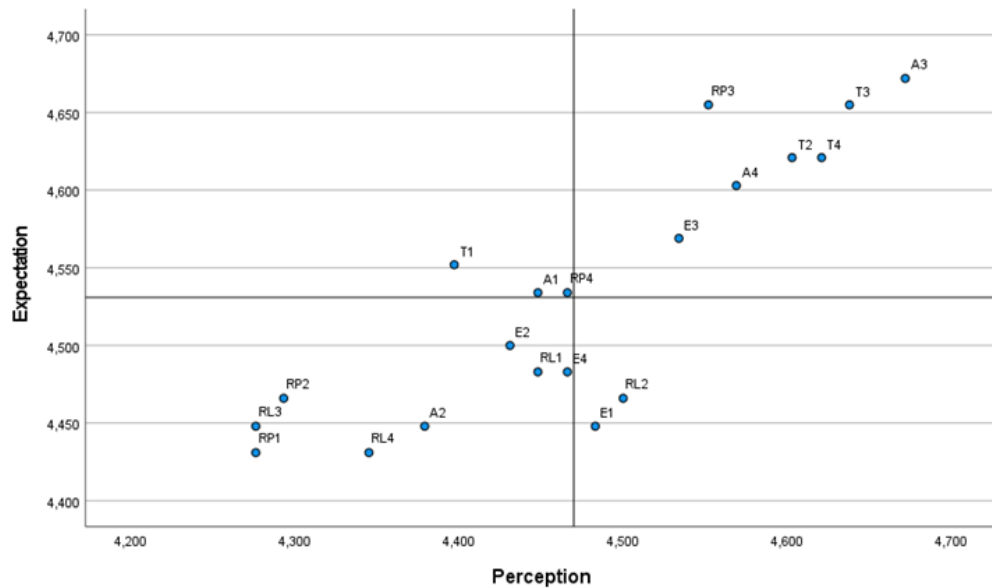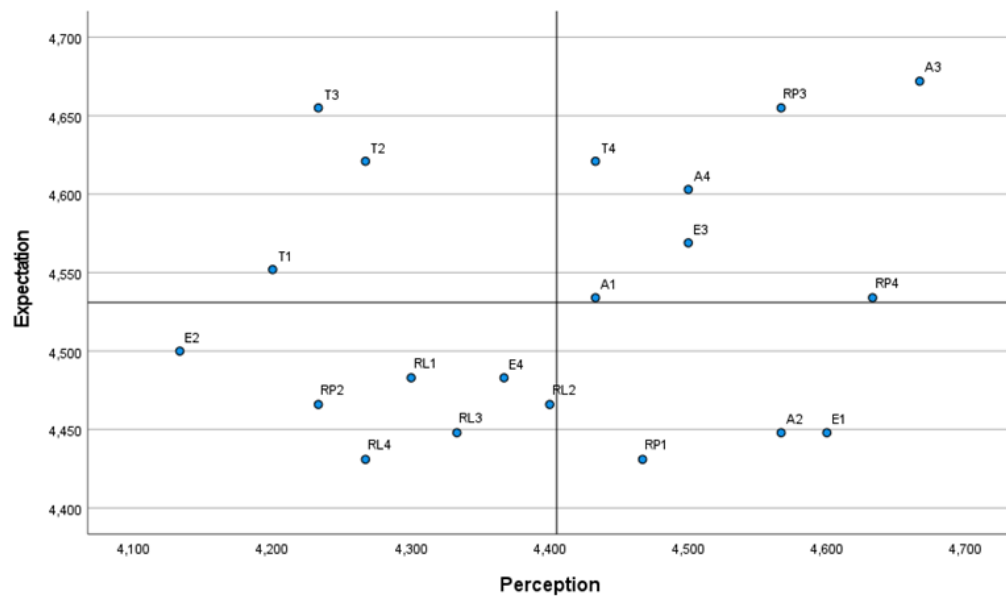**Figure 3.** Importance-Performance Analysis of Gap 5

Figure 4. Importance-Performance Analysis of Gap 6

- Quadrant A (Concentrate Here) contains attributes perceived as critical by customers but relatively low performance. These characteristics are referred to as the essential flaws that require immediate improvement.
- Quadrant B (Keep Up the Good Work) contains the attributes perceived as critical by customers, and the organization appears to perform at a high level. As a result, the attributes in this quadrant are the significant strengths and opportunities for achieving or maintaining competitive advantage.
- Quadrant C (Low Priority) contains low-importance, low-performance attributes collectively referred to as minor weaknesses. As a result, the attributes in this quadrant do not require high priority for improvement.

- • Quadrant D (Possible Overkill) contains attributes perceived as low importance by customers, but the organization performs well. In this case, the organization should reallocate resources allocated to this quadrant's attributes to other quadrants needing performance improvement.

Table 4. Summary of Importance Performance Analysis Gap 5 and Gap 6

Var.	Statement	Gap 5			Gap 6		
		I	P	IPA Quadrant	I	P	IPA Quadrant
T1	Modern equipment	4,552	4,397	A	4,552	4,200	A
T2	Physical facilities are visually appealing	4,621	4,603	B	4,621	4,267	A
T3	Employee are well dressed and neat in appearance	4,655	4,638	B	4,655	4,233	A
T4	Visually appealing materials associated with service	4,621	4,621	B	4,621	4,433	B
RL1	Dependability in handling customers' service problem	4,483	4,448	C	4,483	4,300	C
RL2	Performs the service right the first time	4,466	4,500	D	4,466	4,400	C
RL3	Provides services at the time promised	4,448	4,276	C	4,448	4,333	C
RL4	Maintain error-free records	4,431	4,345	C	4,431	4,267	C
RP1	Inform customers when service will be performed	4,431	4,276	C	4,431	4,467	D
RP2	Offer prompt service to customers	4,466	4,293	C	4,466	4,233	C
RP3	Willingness to help customers	4,655	4,552	B	4,655	4,567	B
RP4	Readiness respond to customers' enquiries	4,534	4,466	A	4,534	4,633	B
A1	Employee able to instill confidence in customers	4,534	4,448	A	4,534	4,433	B
A2	Making customers feel safe in their transaction	4,448	4,379	C	4,448	4,567	D
A3	Employee are courteous at all times	4,672	4,672	B	4,672	4,667	B
A4	Have knowledge to answer customers' question	4,603	4,569	B	4,603	4,500	B
E1	Have convenient business hours	4,448	4,483	D	4,448	4,600	C
E2	Giving customers individual attention	4,500	4,431	C	4,500	4,133	D
E3	Employee have customers best interest at heart	4,569	4,534	B	4,569	4,500	B
E4	Employee understanding customers' needs	4,483	4,466	C	4,483	4,367	C

DISCUSSION

The SERVQUAL method has two perspectives: an internal perspective and an external perspective. The external perspective is used to understand expected, felt, and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the internal perspective is identified with zero defects, doing it right the first time, and adjusting to demand. The more significant the gap resulting from a calculation means the poor quality of these services. Therefore, the priority of quality improvement services is carried out from the gap or most significant gap. On the other hand, the more the size of a gap (the gap is close to zero) or positive) the better the service quality of those services.

In SERVQUAL, Gap 5 shows the gap between perceived services or perceived by customers and services customers expect. The delivery of a service can be appropriate or not yet with what customers expect so that the value of this gap can be positive or negative. Gap 6 shows the difference between the expectations of service users (customers) and the perception of service providers (FLE) on the expectations of service users. Service providers are not always right in interpreting the expectations of service users, and the delivery of a service can be appropriate or not yet with what customers expect so that the value of this gap can be positive or negative.

Consumer expectations must be understood to provide excellent service at any business level. Any differences between customer expectations and the organization's view of customer quality requirements must be discovered and quantified to measure the degree of service quality supplied accurately.

Knowing what customers demand at all operations levels is critical to providing better service. To determine the degree of service given, any differences between customer expectations and the organization's perception of customer quality demands must be

discovered and quantified. Management must understand the crucial role of behavioral components of service, as customers place a premium on Front-Liner Employees' reactions to their specific needs, which vary depending on the occasion or purpose of the service. Management must guarantee that FLE is correctly selected and trained to perform and demonstrate the responsiveness and reliability that customers value (Munhurrun et al., 2010).

To bridge the gap between consumer impressions of service delivery and reality, BBPOM in Jakarta must provide more customer service training to Front-Liner Employees. The training should emphasize their capacity to assist clients in resolving their concerns and issues rapidly. They should exhibit a kind, respectful demeanor and a genuine interest in addressing such situations. Employees' knowledge and skills should be enhanced to deliver timely and dependable client service. They must maintain their commitments when they agree to do something for the consumer within a specific time limit. More importantly, enhancing services with a customer-centric focus will enable the public sector to reclaim trust.

CONCLUSION

By utilizing the SERVQUAL and IPA Matrix instruments, this study was able to assist BBPOM in Jakarta in identifying critical areas for service delivery improvement. Thus, this study demonstrated the essential nature of conducting a survey and considering the opinions of both customers and employees when identifying areas for service quality improvement. BBPOM in Jakarta must understand how customers evaluate service quality and what they can do to measure and improve it. Thus, even a public sector organization must continually improve the quality of service it provides to its customers to exceed customer expectations.

LIMITATION
This study focuses exclusively on Gaps 5 and 6 of the service quality models to obtain an overview of the relationship between customers and Front-Liner Employees; however, other gaps in service quality may be used in future research.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS
The author asserts that there are no conflicts of interest.

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