

**Independent Study Title** Adapting SERVQUAL for use in the Theory of Planned Behavior in Studying Customer's Behavioral Intention towards Contractor's Services in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

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## ABSTRACT

Contractors play a major role in construction projects, for instance, of houses. When the literature is reviewed that relates to construction contractors, the majority are technically driven, with their research objectives mainly focused on the technical aspects of the contractor's project delivery system, i.e. operations qualities in terms of construction delays, cost overruns and delivery failures. Realizing this gap, this research attempts to study how contractors influence the perceptions of clients towards behavioral intentions, customer loyalty and the various attributes of contractor service qualities.

An examination into the literature shows that theory of planned behavior can be adapted. In this research, the concept of SERVQUAL is also exploited in the operationalization of survey instrument, but is based on treating it as base for the client's in a construction project to believe they are in control of their decision making that relates to the quality works of the contractor engaged, and as such, the theory of

planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985), can be adapted to use for predicting the loyalty behavior of the clients towards the contractors. The use of service quality in perceived behavioral control measurement also replaces the subjective approach of the theory of planned behavior in attitudes and beliefs measurements, by now relying on more objective measures of the clients' perceptions towards the actual services experienced. This clearly is a point of entry of contribution to the theory of planned behavior.

Nevertheless, to carry the research forward, questionnaire instruments are not available in the literature, and the research thus uses interviews to provide the necessary themes and justify the patterns of the themes to help guide further literature review as well as questionnaire items development. Thus usefulness of this mixed method approach can lead to higher R-squared strength in multivariate regression analysis which is generally not feasible in the generically deductive approach to research design.

Apart from validating the applicability of the theory of planned behavior framework, this research also provides numerous key points of contributions, such as in terms of implications to the construction contractors. For instance, the ANOVA and correlations analyses of the data indicates that clients of higher income groups tend to perceive the services better serve to their requirements, and the most significant factors are service qualities relating to reliability (i.e. that the company can reliably meet the requirements, in terms of right quality the first time, delivering to the promise as demonstrated in the specifications or standards), tangibles as represented by the quality of works and the uses of quality materials, advanced technologies and equipment in the construction processes, and the assured safety conformance in design, basics of engineering works and in various other aspects of guarantees and warranties. And, although this research cannot provide similar significant evidences on other variables, i.e. behavioral intentions, or other aspects of service quality, and loyalty, but descriptively, the trend is there that the higher income groups perceive the services better serve to their expectations or requirements. Towards this end, the construction contractors would need to be proactive in engaging with lower-income groups to ensure

consistency of service attitude and competencies, and thus to help them build brand image of consistency of the treatments across different income groups. The same implication goes to the aspect of educational levels.

**Keywords:** Service Quality (SERVQUAL)/ Theory of Planned Behavior/ Subjective Norm/ Pricing/ Behavioral Intention/ Customer Loyalty/ Construction/ Contractor/ Chiang Rai.

