



Measuring Service Quality in the Irish Retail Sector:  
Applying the SERVQUAL model to Identify Service Quality  
Gaps

Marisol Manzo Moreno

Student Number: 10123636

Supervisor: Ann Masterson

Word count: 19,409

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this dissertation is the result of effort and all the content developed is entirely my own except where otherwise stated. All the other sources are acknowledged in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. The dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master Business Administration, Level 9 at Dublin Business School; the work of this dissertation is not submitted in any other form to any other organization or institute.

Marisol Manzo Moreno

22- May- 2015

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express special thanks to my great family that were always next me with love and care, making every day of this process a little easier.

A number of people have played a major role in the creation of this text, first I would like to acknowledge to my supervisor Ann Masterson for the support and professional guidance provided in the dissertation process.

To the Ranelagh staff, because they allowed me to carry out this research, thank you for your consistent interest on this dissertation.

To all my friends that always cheer me up especially on those moments when I thought I could not go any further.

Finally, to my soulmate and family for letting me be part of their life a little bit every day, making me feel at home even though mine is thousand miles away.

My sincere thanks,

Marisol Manzo Moreno

## **ABSTRACT**

In a hyper-competitive market, the customer enhancement is challenging, when it comes to a business and its growth strategy, change is constant. The ongoing state of flux is forcing the businesses to continuously optimize their processes, researching and innovating, finding ways to differentiate their services from its competitors, making the business as customer oriented as possible, focusing on the ability to build a long-term sustainable relationships with the customers. Bearing this in mind, the researcher has design a study aiming to evaluate general levels of satisfaction among customers of the service delivered by the Ranelagh launderette, by using a modified SERVQUAL instrument. The study will include the analysis of the impact of each individual SERVQUAL dimension components regarding customer satisfaction. According to several theories and concepts around quality and customer satisfaction that were found on the current literature in order to develop the body of this research, on the data collection, 50 questionnaires were handled face-to-face by the researcher to the customers of Ranelagh launderette, having all of the questionnaires successfully filled up in a correct way. For the analysis of the sample, the researcher used the computer software Microsoft Excel 2010. Where according to the results the general serviced quality perceived by the customers is seen has high and therefore the majority of the universe is feeling satisfied with the service provider, this mainly because the service provider communicates in a correct way the premises about their service. Nevertheless, the results shown some failures in the actual strategy, therefore this research suggests some actions to improve and provide the right service.

Keywords: Services Marketing, Service Quality, SERVQUAL, Customer Satisfaction

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter intends to provide an insight of the dissertation. It will go through the research background using academic and personal justification, with a brief introduction to the main topics being researched such as, Customer satisfaction and the retail industry in Ireland; describing the scope and its limitations for this research.

### **1.2 Research Background and its Academic Justification**

As global markets become increasingly integrated, all firms from the largest multinational to the smallest entrepreneur must be able to find a market niche, which enables the firm to survive in highly competitive markets and to prosper by finding the best ways to meet the need and desires to target consumers. (Raab, G., Ajami, R., Gargeya, V. and Goddard, G. 2008) In a hyper-competitive market, the customer enhancement is challenging, when it comes to a business and its growth strategy, change is constant. The ongoing state of flux is forcing the businesses to continuously optimize their processes, researching and innovating, finding ways to differentiate their services from its competitors, making the business as customer oriented as possible, focusing on the ability to build a long-term sustainable relationships with the customers. Bearing this in mind, doing business in present economy is going further than setting prices and quantities, in fact, in different products and services categories, service quality has become extremely important for organizations in order to be more competitive and therefore successful (Schneider, Holcombe and White, 1997). With improvements in consumer sentiment, non-essential and luxury spending and value perception is likely to remain as key consideration for the business. (Euromonitor International, 2013). Customer orientation is one of the most important factors of success

needed to survive in an environment characterized by enormous competition. Delivering consistently good service quality is difficult but profitable for service organizations. (Parasuraman Zeithaml and Berry 1988) an effective feedback is required for any entity or business, for being able to formulate a management structure conducive to timely feedback as it regard the want and desires of the customers.. (Raab, G., Ajami, R., Gargeya, V. and Goddard, G. 2008)

When the business take responsibility for understanding and better serving customers, they generate measurable results for the business, loyalty and positive word of mouth save the business the steep costs of acquiring new customers and thereby boost profitability. (Harvard Business School Press, 2006). The rise and appeal of CRM (customer relationship Management) has come from heightening of competition, the constantly changing and ever-higher customer standards and expectations as to quality, price and reliable service, as well expectations regarding the market transparence via improved access to relevant information, and CRM has come to the forefront of today's successful companies. Customer expectations are increasingly becoming the center of attention in entrepreneurial activities; it is not a new insight, but one that has nevertheless often been unrecognized in the past years. (Raab, G. et al. 2008). In addition the recent literature express that in assessing the quality, the customer orients her or his expectations to the requested output. This means that the customer expectations can also be analyzed and directed systematically (Bruhn, M. 2003).

### **1.3 The Retailing Industry in Ireland**

Since the crisis in 2008, developing market economies like Ireland have been able to recover appreciable rates of growth, in part due to the continuation of their internationalization. (WTO, 2014). Following the key economic factors on the general picture of Ireland's economy, it can be noticed a change on the volume percentage on consumer spending from (-5.1) in 2009 to 1.7 in 2014 (NTMA, 2014). According to the forecast made by IBEC economics and taxation unit, the retail sector generates 5 billion Euros in taxes every year. Retail sales (excluding car sales) account for about 40 % of the total consumer spending in Ireland, which can be reflected on the annual growth of 3-4% in the volume of retail sales, forecasting that the Irish retail sector has the potential to reach 46 billion Euros in value terms. It is clear that the retail sector is a large, diverse, indigenous sector with great economic importance, particularly when it comes to employment, despite this, the sector has suffered more than the most during the economic downturn. (IBEC, 2014).

### **1.4 Customer Service and Satisfaction**

Customer orientation is one of the most important factors of success needed to survive in an environment characterized by enormous competition. The business that are customer oriented, manage to arrive relatively quickly in a situation where they can rapidly and effectively react to “ new market opportunities”, so that they can, via customer-focus concepts, adjust to newly-developed customer wants. (Raab, G., Ajami, R., Gargeya, V. and Goddard, J., 2008). With the customer research the business can track the events, thoughts,

and experiences that have led people to spend money on products that help them grapple with real life tasks, by analyzing this materials, it can be indentify new opportunities for the business to appeal to customers. (Harvard Business School Press, 2006).

This clearly highlights the importance of service quality and its continuous improvement for organizations regarding to their growth and survival in an actual more competitive marketplace. (Marroquin, 2014). In support Zeithaml et al. 1990 exposed that in the short run, superior quality yields increased profits via premium prices and in the longer run, superior or improving relative quality is the more effective way for a business to grow; quality improvement also leads to operational efficiencies. Quality service can be defined as a service to the customer that is of a consistently high and dependable standard. The challenge for measuring services is that they are intangible as Zeithalm et al. (1990) mentioned that is because they are performances and experiences rather than objects, precise manufacturing specifications concerning quality can rarely be set.

Despite the fact the literature has shown that one of the main factors of customer preference is the price and the value, as can be explained on the marketing textbooks referring to the 4P's theory. Nevertheless, it can be more suitable to the manufacturing industry even though all industries may include a small percentage of service; in a service business the most important competitive weapon is the fifth P of performance. It is the performance of the service that separates one service firm from others; (Zeithalm et al. 1990). Previous research showed that the most important attributes determining whether a customer will return to a service establishment was the quality of service and the least considered factors were place and ambiance (Bojanic, Shea 2007). Quality service in not only managed by the customer

perspective but also it involves the business view, from a service perspective. It has to realize that providing customers with an appropriate variety of services, in addition to the core product, this will enable management to see the different possibilities compared with other strategic perspectives. (Grönos, 2007). Understanding how and why consumers are behaving will assist in identifying future potential opportunities. (Bord Bia, 2013). Reason why, The Retail Industry, needs to reinvigorate the consumer willingness to spending by modifying the value perception of the service delivered. Best practice in market segmentation suggests that researchers identify segments based on customer needs. (Bennion. 1987;. Griffith. & Pol. 1994;. Freytag. & Clark. 2001). As a result, firms have embraced customer satisfaction as a driver of business strategies, often including this concept as a key organizational objective (Gale. 1994;. Woodruff. & Gardial. 1996). Recently, Garver. et al ..(2008) Suggested that researchers would better understand their employees and customers if they formed need-based segments on attribute importance, and then examined perceptions of segment satisfaction.

### **1.5 Personal Justification**

The academic background of the researcher is not related with the knowledge in business, reason why she decided to challenge herself, choosing something to go beyond her comfort zone, on her work experience she was always involved with services and customers. The researcher has a particular interest regarding to customer satisfaction, because of her background in hospitality environment for more than five years, she has a great interest in developing new ways to improve her customer service level. Especially nowadays on the business environment, managers are changing the business strategy, focusing on the customer

point of view. The actual job of the researcher is in this launderette, reason why the commitment with this research is to be able to offer a great contribution for the company improving, and helping the business to get to know their customers, with the only purpose of satisfaction. With all the knowledge she acquire in the master program cursed in the present year, she is going to be able to identify important aspects of service quality, in order to improve their approach.

With this in mind, the researcher has design a study aiming to evaluate general levels of satisfaction among customers of the service delivered by the Ranelagh launderette, by using a modified SERVQUAL instrument. The study will include the analysis of the impact of each individual SERVQUAL dimension component regarding customer satisfaction. With this analysis, the researcher will attempt to answer the following hypothesis:

*H1:* There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and the customer perceptions regarding to the service quality dimensions.

*H2:* There is a significant gap between the customer expectations and the customer perceptions regarding to the service quality dimensions.

The findings of this research will help to future research regarding the comparison between customers' expectations and perceptions on the measurement of service quality with the purpose of obtain customer satisfaction.

## **1.6 Dissertation Organizational Breakdown Structure**

This dissertation will be organized by six chapters briefly described below.

### **1.6.1 Chapter 1: Introduction**

The first chapter of the dissertation will reflect the purpose of the study, with the overview and the statement of the current position of the retailing industry in Ireland, identifying the need for research.

### **1.6.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter has the aim to explain the importance of the literature review on the dissertation, followed by an analysis of the current literature in relation with the research topic, taking into consideration all those theories and techniques relevant to the development of this research.

### **1.6.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter consists on the steps this dissertation must consider for the research planning, it discusses the use of theories with a broad explanation of the chosen model appropriate for this dissertation. This chapter will help to the reader to understand the process the researcher followed to develop the investigation.

### **1.6.4 Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

This chapter will report in the detail the data collected through the research, highlighting the findings that will have a relation with the hypothesis and objectives of this dissertation.

### **1.6.5 Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter deals with the reflection of the findings through the research, answering the research question and/or hypothesis. Creating a background for future studies, following the recommendations the researcher will provide.

### **1.6.6 Chapter 6: Self Reflection on Own Learning**

The last chapter of this dissertation will contain a full insight of the learning the researcher acquired on the process of developing this dissertation, describing all the skills needed to complete the master's degree program and the dissertation itself.

### **1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Research**

This research has the focus to study the expectations and perceptions of the customers of Ranelagh Launderette in Ranelagh, Dublin, Ireland, in relation to the service provided and the experience acquired from the same launderette. For this reason the scope of the research is the implementation of the SERVQUAL model and determines the level of satisfaction of the customers.

For the achievement of the scope mentioned before, the research involved surveying 50 customers and the personnel from the launderette, using the questionnaire developed by the authors Parasuaman, Zeithalm and Berry in 1988 with the name of SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item scale for Measuring Consumer perceptions of service quality. In addition, with the analysis of the secondary data available in the subject of service quality that has been carried out. This includes the literature review that consists on the use of books, academic journals and the electronic database EBSCOhost portal available from Dublin Business School library.

However, the limitations of this research that will be fully explained in chapter 3 but briefly mentioned above.

The first limitation is time, the approval of the questionnaires from the company and the mentor of the research from the academic point of view, and the analysis of the methodology regarding to the sample size in order to be relevant to be researched.

The second limitation related with the first one, because of the time available considered a short period for a research might have an impact on the questionnaire responses.

## CHAPTER 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2008) defines the literature review as the part of the research where it has to be reviewed, the main ideas and research related to the chosen area of interest, the comprehensive critique uses all available sources to locate that has a direct bearing on the research problem. It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results with other findings in the existing body of knowledge. Creswell, J.W. (2014) The literature review is a crucial part of a dissertation, it provides the basis on which the research will justify the research questions and build the research design. In addition to understand the importance of the literature review Saunders et al. (2012) says that the preliminary search helps to generate and refine the research ideas, in order to demonstrate awareness of the current state of knowledge in the subject. This chapter of the dissertation will review the literature that exists around service quality and customer satisfaction highlighting those ideas from the literature that can be considered as a main driver to conduct this study with the understanding of the main theories in the subject area and how they were applied.

## 2.2. Services Marketing

“Services are going to move in this decade to being the front edge of the industry” quote from, Gerstner, L.V. (2006), in this context Baron, et al. (2013) identified the expansion in the scope of contemporary development in the service sectors, which have accounted for an increasing proportion of global economic activity. Services can be defined as processes and performances provided or coproduced by one entity or person for another entity or person. (Zeithalm, V. et al 2009, pp4). Virtually all organizations compete to some degree on the basis of a service, it is difficult to name even one industry for which service matters are unimportant. Services are so much a part of what its produced, consumed, and exported, reason why there has a need to concern about quality (Zeithalm, V., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. 1990). The Marketing Science Institute suggests that corporate strategies focused on customer satisfaction, revenue generation, and service quality may actually be more profitable than strategies focused on cost cutting or strategies that attempt to do both simultaneously. (Rust, R., Moormar, C. and Dickson, P. 2002). In addition, Baron, et al. (2013) have described and discussed that by the creation of the service culture among organizations, the nature of the customer relationship will change, moving from the customer relationship management (CRM) to the consideration of customer engagement, justifying this change with the sales growth and superior competitive advantage of the business.

The usual marketing framework is based on the characteristics of manufacturing goods. Services marketing involve the approach that modifies the standard theory of the “4Ps” of the marketing mix (McCarthy, 1960). Thus, the nature of services poses distinct marketing challenges research has shown the need to extend the marketing mix by adding the “Ps” related to services: *process, physical environment and people*, called the “7Ps” of the

marketing mix (Doyle, 1994, Booms and Bitner, 1981 and Heuvel 1993). This addition represents the required strategies for meeting customers needs profitability in a competitive marketplace. According to Palmer, A (2009) the principle of the extended marketing mix is to break a service offering down into a number of components parts and to arrange them into manageable subject areas for making the appropriate strategies or decisions. Therefore, and accordingly to Skälen (2009) the marketing of the organization need to develop managerial practices that promote the customer orientation of the business. In addition to this statement, Dibb, et al. (2006) says that it is vital to understand the complexity of the service product and to seek to limit its variability.

### **2.3 The concept of service**

The literature on services is diverse and extensive, according to Gilmore, A. (2003) and Zeithaml, V. A. et al. (2009) the important growth of services industries highlights the contribution to world economies. Supporting this statement since the crisis in 2008, Ireland recovered at exponential rates of growth (GDP) due to the internationalization. On the figures provided by WTO, (2014) the key economic factors on Ireland economy show a change on the volume percentage of consumer spending from (-5.1) in 2009 to 1.7 in 2014. The 40% of the total consumer spending is reflected on retail sales, which according to IBEC it can have an annual growth of 4%, forecasting the potential to reach 46 billion euro in value terms for 2020.

From the evolution of the services marketing literature, many definitions of the concept of service came across; there have been arguments about the extent to which services should be considered. On one hand, some have argued that despite the fact services are performances,

still have characteristics similar to goods in terms of how they are produced, consumed and evaluated. On the other hand, many have argued that the differences that exist between goods and services highlight the limitations of traditional marketing principles when applied to marketing of services. By their very nature, services are diverse and therefore have often been difficult to define, services should be defined in their own right, not in relation to goods because of the distinctive characteristics among them. According to Grönroos, C. (pp52, 2007) “ A service is a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, not necessarily always, take a place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems”. Additionally Lovelock, C. and Wirtz, J. (2011) express that services are economic activities offered by one party to another. Often time-based, performances bring about desired results, objects, or other assets for which the organization have responsibility”. This definition emphasizes that the customer expect “value” in exchange for money, time, and effort. However, despite the scope of the service and the understanding of its meaning, services have a number of distinctive and unique characteristics, that separates services from goods often described as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability. These are defined bellow:

### **2.3.1 Intangibility**

According to Palmer, A. (2011) a pure service cannot be assessed using any of the physical senses, services are performances or actions rather than objects, they cannot be seen, felt, tasted or touched in the same manner than tangible goods. In addition Zeithaml, V., Bitner,

M., and Gremier, D. (2009) states that intangibility presents several marketing challenges, precise manufacturing specifications concerning uniform quality can rarely be set, but when what is being sold is purely a performance, the criteria customers use it may be complex and difficult to capture precisely. However, Grönroos, C (2007) says that in order to develop a service management and marketing models for the business, it is important to understand what customer are really looking for and what they evaluate.

### **2.3.2 Heterogeneity**

Services are performances produced by humans; no two services will be precisely alike. In addition, is important to point out that the characteristics of customers may differ as well; each will have unique demands or experience the service in a unique way. Therefore Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Gremier, D. (2009) explains that because services are heterogeneous across time, organizations, and people, ensuring consistent service quality is challenging. Quality depends on many factors such as the ability of the customer to articulate his or her needs, the ability and willingness of the personnel to satisfy those needs, the presence (or absence) of other customers, and the level of demand for the service.

### **2.3.3 Inseparability**

Services that are a series of processes, where production and consumption cannot be totally separated, and where the customer often actively participate in the production process are bound to be perceived as extremely complex Grönroos, C. (2007). In this regard Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Gremier, D. (2009), explains that because services are often produced and consumed at the same time, mass production is difficult. The quality of the services and customer satisfaction will be highly dependent on what happens in “real time” including the

actions of employees and the interaction with the customer. This all leads to consumers having higher levels of perceived risk. Gilmore, A. (2003).

#### **2.3.4 Perishability**

The perishability of services is a key concept in services marketing and refers to the fact that services cannot be saved, stored, resold, or returned. In contrast to goods they cannot be stored in inventory or even returned if the customer is unhappy. Creating a primary issue for marketers face in relation to service perishability, demand, forecasting and creative planning for capacity utilization are therefore important and challenging decision areas according to Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Greiner, D. (2009).

It must be emphasized that both manufactured goods and service products contribute to the quality experience, but this research is concerned primarily with the service delivery process. Managing customers interactions and expectations in relation of the physical evidence, process and people. According to Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Gremier, D. (2009) customers not only influence their own service outcomes, but they can influence other customers as well. The three elements of the marketing mix mentioned before are an important tool that addresses the uniqueness of services, keeping the customer at the center what Grönroos (1990) called “functional quality”. How to define quality is the next topic of interest.

#### **2.4 The concept of quality**

Once the discussion of services has been carried out, is important to turn the discussion on how quality can be define, thus, this concept has been researched for several authors through

decades making necessary to understand the various definitions and approaches that exist in the marketing environment. Kasper, H., Heldsdingen, P. V. and M Gabbot, M. (2006) argues that the application of quality in services is relatively recent phenomenon and according to Scheneider, B. and White, S. (2004) Quality is an ambiguous term and perhaps the most important and complex component of the business strategy. However, in the existing literature was explained that is challenging to try to establish a single and universal definition for quality, nevertheless there are several different ways to approach the definition of it. According to recent publication in the American Marketing Association, Golder, P. Mitra, D. and Moorman, C. (2012) express, that quality continues to be a frequent focus on research marketing and other disciplines because over the last five years, 79 articles on quality have been published in *Journal of Marketing and Management Science*.

The concept of quality was usually seen to be a production concern with the extent to which a product conforms to technical standards (Kasper et al. 1999; Oliver, 1997). Although is only suited for quality in mass-production goods and its measurement. Among the definitions available on the literature, it was noticeable the fact that the definitions are changing with a common factor such as customer centered. For example, the research carry out by Battinni, M. et al. (2012) points out that the concept of quality can be approached from: the productive point of view, where can be defined as “ the fraction of goods that are produced correctly” and the Customer-satisfaction point of view: in which the quality of the product is determined by the customers’ perception. The limitation of this approach is subjective, due to every customer can have an individual perception of quality with freedom of variation. As, Gummesson (1991), also express strong disapproval on the belief of the subjective approach arguing that the evaluation process should involve the subjective and objective aspects. Bearing this in mind, the two points of view should be considered when it refers to quality, such as Wicks, A. M. and Roethlein, C. J. (2009) explain in their publication for the “*Journal*

*of business and Economic studies*”. They argue that even though the quality definition is often described by just one approach as Battinii, M et al (2012) states in their research mentioned previously. In contrast, these scholars explain that in order of reach quality in services both approaches should be considered as a common factor. In order for the organization to compete in the world-class business environment is crucial to refer to the user-based definition because is more important to the customer and the process-based definition because is more important for the business, although there is no such thing as a universal definition for quality, the organization should seek for balance in their strategy. Additionally, Radomir et al. (2012) technical approach may be suitable for the measurement of the overall process, in other words the final result of what was delivered in the process; while the user approach is appropriate in the manner of evaluate how was the delivery process.

Nevertheless, the customer-based approach Garvin (1988), is more relevant to discuss in this research because the study focus on the customer perceptions and expectations of the service provided by the launderette, and identify the gap in between (If it exists) exploring the literature based on the perspective of Zeithalm et al. (1985). Additionally in order to direct the scope of the researcher choice, is worthy to mention that The American Society of Quality control defines quality as “ the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs”. Kotler, P. et al. (pp.432, 2012). This is a customer-focus definition and fits into the objectives of this research. According to Radomir, et al. (2012) under this approach the quality evaluations based on the customer perceptions, are therefore completely different from those that considered the technical approach. Because of the role customers have on the delivery process, the service marketing literature adopts this perspective. However, these authors explain as well that the research quality in present times should refer to all perspectives without the need to find

superiority of one perspective over another adapting the definition of quality according to the business necessities.

## **2.5 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction**

According to a recent research carried out by Sunayma (2013) quality can be view as the level of service attributes needed to make the service acceptable and profitable for the organization in the market place, this is from the organization point of view, in contrast the customer point of view focus only in satisfying their own needs and desires. Reason why Parasuraman, Zeithalm and Berry (1985,1988) underpinned the need in research to understand service quality, studying services separately from goods, but today, the subject service quality has acquired an important amount of research attention among business and the marketing environment. For any organization the quality of their service costs money, research is necessary for the organization to know where to allocated the resources to make the best impact. Based on the discussion about the own characteristics of services as a concept, is essential to narrow the scope, and focus on the definition of service quality, that according to Zeithalm, V. and Parasuraman, A. (pp.1, 2004) can be defined as “ the difference between customers’ expectations of service and their perceptions of the actual service performance”. The obvious absence of tangible manifestations in services creates a great challenge to measure it, quality service ensures that customers are satisfied with what they have exchange money, time and effort. What can be perceived as a outstanding service to one customer, maybe average for others, but is crucial for the services industry to measure positive and negative experiences in order to identify the causes of service quality shortfalls and the design and implement corrective actions on the management strategy.

The actual research in literature shows some discussion on the potential benefits for the implementation of quality. Such as the competitive advantage that the organization can create by isolating its customer from the competitors, called as well *customer inertia* (Kasper, et al. 2006); the positive word of mouth from existing customers that are satisfied reduces the costs of the organization's marketing approach on attracting new customers. The natural financial improvement related with customer loyalty and the impact on the internal marketing of the organization by a decreasing the staff turnover although this last point has been only limited empirical support.

According to Kasper, et al (2006) quality is something an organization is responsible for, and satisfaction is in the customer domain, because of the interrelatedness of quality and satisfaction should not be taken as individual approaches. In the literature exists some evidence that suggests that satisfaction is a prerequisite of perceived service quality. In more detail, the goal of the service science is to provide to the organization a noticeable increase in efficiency and sustainability of the same. (Baron, et al. (2013). In this regard, a recent study presented in Allied Academics by Lorenzo, L. (2010) revealed that providing quality service leads to competitive advantage, in other words the organizational growth and the enhanced profitability as a return of customer loyalty.

### **2.5.1 Customer Satisfaction**

As the literature in marketing indicates, customer satisfaction is the ultimate goal for the organization success (Hoffman, D. K. and Bateson, J. 2001). Thus, in this century customer satisfaction defines a clear sense in today's economic activities highlighting the link in between the financial business performance and customer satisfaction, referring to Corneliu

(2013) in his recent publication. In addition, Solomon et al (2006) describes that the satisfaction of the customer will be determined by the overall feelings or attitudes the customer has towards the service that has been delivered. In other words, from Kotler and Keller (2009) the satisfaction will depend in the performance of the service provider regarding to the customer expectations, the subject of expectations will be covered later on in this chapter.

The Institute of customer service (2013) suggests that satisfaction measures, helps the organization to understand the key metrics that affect the business strategy that could influence customer segments. It is important to state that the measurement of quality satisfaction is a key component of customer retention and loyalty, due to high satisfaction creates an emotional bond with the organization not just a rational preference. According to one study conducted in 2013, by Marinkovic et al., satisfaction is considered as a latent variable, confronting many issues and challenges when is measured.

For this research, the customers chosen for evaluate the process of how service quality is managed and the variety of important quality elements in the services offered by Ranelagh launderette in which are likely to indicate the general level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction providing the opportunity to the organization to change their approach in case of being necessary. Conducting this research to review one of the most important measurement model in current literature of service quality named SERVQUAL.

## **2.6 Measuring Service Quality**

According to Hoffman, D. and Bateson, J. (2006) the process of service quality can be examined in terms of gaps between expectations and perceptions on the part of the management, in other words they explained that the expectations communicated to the customer are marketer-controlled (organization or business). The main goal for measurement of quality in services is to close the “service gap” or at least to try to narrow the differences as much as possible. In this regard, Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Gremler, D. (2009) points out that closing this gap is critical to delivering quality service; effective services marketing is a complex undertaking that involves many different strategies, skills and tasks; viewing services in a structured, integrated way called the gaps model of service quality. This three authors have been explored the gap model basis, gaps that can occur within the organization providing the service and it can occur in any of this gaps and include:

### **Gap 1: The listening gap**

Providing services that customers perceive as excellent requires that the business knowledge of what customers expect. This gap may occur when the organization overlooks or underestimate the need to fully understand customer’s expectations; When this happens, companies provide services that not match customer’s expectations: important features are left out and the levels of performance on features that are provided are “inadequate”. Bearing this in mind, the suggestions for the closure of this gap according to the last publication of Hoffman, D. and Bateson, J. (2006) the detailed knowledge of the customer desires is essential in order to build a response in the service operating system. Several tasks on behalf of the organization can include: the adequate marketing research orientation, the interaction

between the management and customers, market segmentation, and the ability of the service recovery after failure.

### **Gap 2: The standards gap**

The standards that have been set for service delivery, the entire process, such as, time and the behavior of the personnel in the service interaction may open this gap between the management perceptions of customer expectations. In many cases, the strategy selected by the management can be directed to enhance resources that only concern to other organizational goals such as sales, profits, or market share. This approach can be cited as misguidance priority as Hoffman, D. and Bateson, J. (2006) point out as an impediment for the organization progress in delivering quality services. According to the recent literature the action that should be undertaken in order to close this gap, is to have customer-driven service standards, focusing on customer requirement instead of short-term profits.

### **Gap 3: The service performance**

Organizations offering services that are highly interactive, labor intensive, and performed in multiple locations are especially vulnerable to Gap 3. That can occur when the employees are unwilling or unable to perform a service at the level required Zeithaml, V., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. (1990). In addition, it tends more into the employees' behavior in the real-time delivery process, where the inadequate support received from the management leads to poor employee productivity, unsatisfied customers and a noticeable increase in the size of the delivery gap. Hoffman, D. and Bateson, J. (2006), Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M. and Gremler, D. (2009), states that the closure of this gap is related with the recruitment and training process.

#### **Gap 4: The communication\**

Appropriate and accurate communication about services is the responsibility of both marketing and operations. In one hand, marketing must accurately reflect what happens in actual service encounters and in the other hand, operations must deliver what is promised in communications such as Zeithaml, V., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. (1990) stated on their first publications. Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M., and Gremler, D. (2009) add that effective coordination of the actual service delivery with the external communication, therefore, narrows the communications gap and favorably affects the customer gap as well; companies must also manage all communications to customers so that inflated promises do not lead to higher expectations. In other words, this gap can be affected by two basic factors: 1) to overpromise and 2) the flow of internal communication. Where the balance in between these two should exist in order to avoid an awkward position when a customer requests the services promises, and the provider has no idea what the customer is talking about.

According to the existing literature, the gaps mentioned before are essential to create the *gap* 5, the closure of this gap may support the organization to achieve a good service quality and met or exceed the customer expectation, keeping the judgment of the customer on the real perspectives. Gap that is the focus for this research, where through the SERVQUAL it will be explore the wideness of this gap, between what customer expects and what was perceived from the service interaction. And so on the researcher will focus just on the interaction with customer putting aside the gaps that focus on the organization, given to the organization's need to focus on the customer and to use the knowledge to drive the business strategy. In order to understand this gap, the expectations and perceptions will be fully explained later on in this chapter.

### **2.6.1 The SERVQUAL**

Since the mid-1980s, the researchers Grönroos (1984) and Parasuraman et al. (1985) state that the existing quality standards in the goods sector was not extendable to the services sector. Zeithalm, et al. made a study with the purpose to understand and improve service quality; exploring the factor that influence customers' in the evaluation process. They determined the common dimension among three different service sectors: retail banking, credit cards, securities brokerage, and repair and maintenance. The results of their initial study were the ten service quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, access, communication and understanding the customer; Although these dimensions were summarized into five as consequence of the refined results of a later study. Based on various aspects of service quality it was developed a research instrument named SERVQUAL, with the premise to explore the differences between expectations and perceptions, arguing that only customers can judge quality, all other judgments should be considered as irrelevant. The SERVQUAL instrument consists of two sections: a 22-item section that will refer to the customer expectations of excellent firms in a specific service sector and a second 22-item section responsible to measure consumer perceptions of a particular organization in that service sector. The results from these two sections are relevant to compare and obtain the "gap scores" designed to fulfill the five service quality dimensions that are summarized as it follows:

Tangibles: Appealing appearance of the physical facilities, equipment and employees that are involved during the service deliverance,

Reliability: The ability to perform accurately and dependably what the organization promised to deliver the service maintaining error-free records,

Responsiveness: The willingness of the organization to provide help, information and prompt service to customers,

Assurance: The ability of the organization to display trust and confidence, having the knowledge and necessary skills to deliver a service as promised,

Empathy: The individual attention and the understanding of customers' problems, resolving them with a caring approach (Parasuraman, et al. 2009),

The SERVQUAL model was first published in 1988, but since then numerous improvements have been applied. The data collected from SERVQUAL can be used for several purposes explained as it follows: (1) To determine the average score between gaps of customer expectations and perceptions for each service dimension, (2) to assure the service quality for the organization through the five dimensions, (3) to track and create trends about customers expectations and perceptions over time, (4) to compare the results obtained from the SERVQUAL to the competitor scores, and (5) it will facilitate the customer segmentation in order to effectively assess the organization performance in each of the five dimensions.

A diagram exposed in a research by Mukesh, K. et al. (2009) can help to understand how to measure the quality service regarding the five dimensions. (Figure 1)

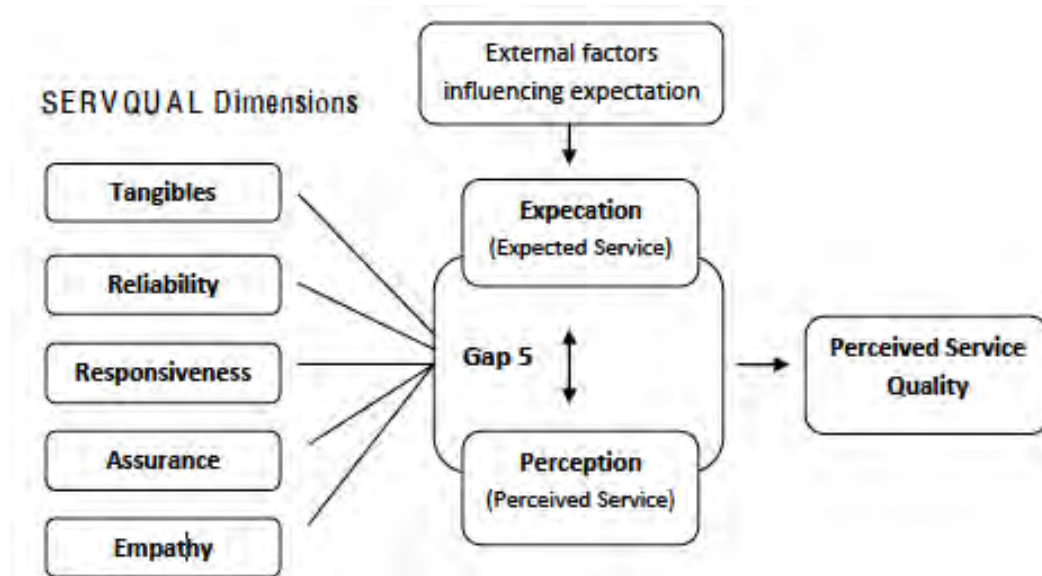


Figure 1. Measuring quality service using SERVQUAL (Mukesh, et al 2009)

On the illustration 1, is expressed on more detail the gap five of expected service, where get influenced by the five dimensions and the external factors such as, previous experiences, personal needs and word of mouth communications.

According to McCollin, C. et al. (2011) the SERVQUAL model has been used in many different studies worldwide, in different service industries especially in B2B and B2C adjusting the model to the needs of each study. However, despite this fact, the scale of SERVQUAL has been subject of constant re-examination and criticism. The major criticisms of the instrument involve the length of the questionnaire, which combining the expectation and perceptions items of the SERVQUAL is a 44-item questionnaire. Referring to Gilmore, A. (2003) argues that measuring expectations is unnecessary, suggesting that expectations and perceptions should be measured on the same scale, in contrast the developers discuss that

the measurement of the expectations is useful as a point of reference in the evaluation of services.

Another of the main problems related to SERVQUAL scale was the great amount of data collection as was recognized from Parasuraman, (1988) when initially developed the ten dimensions instrument, and after was reduced to the five major dimensions. Reason why the instrument was questioned on the validity of the specific dimensions, in which the developers argue that despite the five dimensions represent distinct parts of the service quality, they are indeed interrelated.

Despite the many critics in the existing literature SERVQUAL remains a frequently utilized instrument to assess service quality being modified to address the needs of each study. As an example, Marroquin, J. (2014) shows on his recent publication modifying the instrument in order to measure the quality in canteen services, as well as O'Beirne, S. (2013) who also adapted the instrument, to identify the service quality in financial services in the Irish context. With appropriate adaptation, SERVQUAL can be used by organization with different scopes, within the company to ascertain the quality of service they provide. (Zeithaml, V., Parasuraman, A. and Berry, L. 1990). Bearing this in mind, this research will also adapt the instrument following the suggestions on recent publications related to service quality, the researcher adopted the model to have an insight on the retail sector with an Irish context, with a 44-item questionnaire related with the five dimensions, plus 2 items for demographics such as, age and gender. (See appendix 1 for further detail).

## 2.7 Customer Expectations of Service

Even though the theory of expectations has been used for many studies in marketing like the SERVQUAL, the knowledge in the literature about is very little. To assess a level of satisfaction, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) discusses that customers' service expectations exist at two different levels: 1) The desired level that reflects the service the customer hopes to receive "what it should be". 2) The adequate level, which refers to what, the customer is able to tolerate and finds acceptable. The levels of expectations are related to the service characteristic of being heterogeneous in performance, in order to understand why no two services can be experienced exactly in the same way, even though the service provider is the same and even with the same service employee. The variation of what a customer is willing to accept on the service encounter is called "*The zone of tolerance*". Either very low or very high, which explains what could be considered as a minimum level considered acceptable where the customer can be frustrated and dissatisfied, or where performance exceeds desired service and customers can be very pleased and probably quite surprised as well. Zeithalm et al. (2009) suggests that the customers expectations are simple, referring that customers expect the service provider to do what they supposed to do, in others words, that the service should be delivered as promised, (not broken promises or service errors). However, customer expectations' are influenced by different factors, falling into the category of extravagant or unrealistic, according to Grönroos, C. (2007) if the expectations of the customer are "*unrealistic*" the total perceived quality will be seen as low, the expected quality is a function of a number of factors that includes:

1. The marketing communication like advertising, sales promotion and the overall external market communication.

2. Word of mouth based on the customer's prior experiences
3. Customer personal needs and values involved on the customer choice, having a direct impact on his expectations.

When the organization promise too much or use an inadequate approach, the quality may still be low or deteriorate, if the service provider overpromises, in consequence will automatically raise the customers' expectations too high, restricting the ability of the service provider to meet them. Although two of the factors explained previously (WOM and Customer needs), are not under the full control of the organization, these two factors are influences with the marketing strategy choice of the business. On a recent study made by Wu, P., Huang, C. and Chou, C. (2013) explained that customers that have prior service expectations would induce a negative impact on the perceptions, having a direct impact on customer satisfaction. Which can be explained as the more realistic customer expectations are, the possibility for the organization to meet them is more likely, taking as a whole, the psychological field of expectations will be influenced by the researcher/marketer assumptions from the consumer socio-cultural environment.

In this regard, the researcher has decided to define expectations as the past information customers may associated with the pre-consumption process, having a direct impact on the post-consumption, taking this information as a reference point for judgment and evaluation. Reason why, this investigation has the aim to identify the existing reference points and gaps that may appear in between the two processes.

## **2.8 Customer Perceptions of Service**

After the consumption process, it is clear that the customer perceptions are a function of their prior experience with service or similar services, individual opinion or reaction to other

people's opinion. (Kasper, H. et al. (2006). Every customer can act or react regarding to their own perceptions, not based on objective reality. The reality of each customer is based on the personal needs, wants, values and personal experiences. As Etgar, M. and Fuchs, G. Express in a recent study (2009) perceptions are processes that the consumer select and interpret into their own reality, pointing out the role of expectations in this process. Additionally, Zeithalm, V., Bitner, M. and Gremier, D. (2009), states that post-purchase and post-experience evaluation can predict subsequent consumer behavior and repurchase, particularly for the services.

### **2.8.1 The Perception of value**

According to Hoffman, K. and Bateson, J. (2006), the consumer perceptions of value can refer to the perceived benefits from the purchased or received service in terms of cost to be paid not necessarily making reference only to monetary costs as this may also include: time costs, energy costs and psychic costs. Which can reflect how much time and trouble the customer experienced to acquire the service, in other words, consumers can determine whether they received the benefits they desired in terms of quality and is when the general level of customer satisfaction will emerge.

In this investigation, in the need to explore the Irish perspective of quality in service it can be measured in distinct ways. First, is if the expected serviced is higher than the perceived service, which means low quality, then is if the expected service is equal to the perceived service, being in the "zone of tolerance" of the customer, and last, is if the expected service is lower than the perceived service is when the customer will be satisfied. The results from this

research can provide valuable reference data for the retail service providers, in order to manage, recover and enhance quality.

## **2.9 The Importance of Service Quality in the Retail Industry**

According to retail Ireland (2015) the Irish retail sector employs 275,000 people and in Ireland exists 44,000 retail businesses and 90 % of them are Irish-owned. Bearing this in mind, it can be understood the importance of the retail sector for Ireland as an economical key point. Nowadays the economic activity in this country increased by tourism (8.2%) according to the Central statistics office figures in 2014, acknowledging the need for improvement in the processes in offered services. With the objective, that is to provide the best service, maximizing customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer orientation is one of the most important factors of success needed to survive in an environment characterized by enormous competition. The business that are customer oriented, manage to arrive relatively quickly in a situation where they can rapidly and effectively react to “ new market opportunities”, so that they can, via customer-focus concepts, adjust to newly-developed customer wants. (Raab, G., Ajami, R., Gargeya, V. and Goddard, J., 2008). With the customer research the business can track the events, thoughts, and experiences that have led people to spend money on products that help them grapple with real life tasks, by analyzing this materials, it can be indentify new opportunities for the business to appeal to customers. (Harvard Business School Press, 2006). Thus, the design of strategies for quality service is an crucial issue in the current environment of competition in the businesses related with the tourism industry, understanding how and why consumers are behaving will assist in identifying future potential opportunities. (Bord Bia, 2013).

This clearly highlights the importance of service quality and its continuous improvement for organizations regarding to their growth and survival in an actual more competitive marketplace. (Marroquin, 2014). Reason why, The Retail Industry, needs to reinvigorate the consumer willingness to spending by modifying the value perception of the service delivered.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

According to Glatthorn, A. and Joyner, R. (2005) a research design is a specific plan for studying a research problem. Therefore, research methods can be and are associated with different kinds of research design. The latter represents a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data. (Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2007, pp 39). In addition Saunders et al. (2012) express that methodology can be define as the theory of how research should be undertaken, including theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based an the implications of these for the method or methods adopted. Consequently, a case of study entails the detailed exploration of a specific case, which could be a community, organization or person. . (Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2007, pp 30).

The intention of this study is to identify and describe the general service level of Ranelagh launderette in Dublin, Ireland. Identifying the reason causing the service gaps (if it exists) based on the comparison between customers expectations and their perceptions towards the launderette service performance and in which ways the insufficiencies can be improved. To that end this chapter will include a detailed explanation of the proposed methodology along with the problem statement and the explanation of the methodology of how the participants where selected and how the data collection was achieved assessing a clear structure for the fulfillment of the research purpose and objectives.

## 3.2 Problem Statement

Creswell, J. and Clark, V. (2011) express that the statement of a problem conveys a specific problem, or issue, that needs to be addresses and the reasons why the problem is important to study. Research questions are important According to Bryman, A. (2008) Poorly formulated research question will lead to poor research, when there are no clear questions, there is a great risk that the research will be unfocused and it be unsure of what data collect. . In the case of this study, the main research question is expressed as it follows:

“Can the SERVQUAL model be applied in the Retail sector like Ranelagh Launderette in order to describe the general service level: how customers perceive service quality and if they feel satisfy with this service?

### 3.2.1 Research Objectives

According to Saunders et al. (2012) the research objectives are likely to lead to greater specify than using investigative questions; Research objectives express “what and how” and it can be seen to complement a research question providing a key step to transform the research question into a research project. For this reason objectives have been created for this research, expresses as follows:

1. To describe the influence of the SERVQUAL **tangible dimension** on customer’s satisfaction from Ranelagh Launderette.

Focus on analyzing the following tangible items:

- Physical Facilities.
- Employee’s Physical appearance.

- Physical environment.
- Contemporary equipments.

2. To evaluate the influence of the SERVQUAL **reliability dimension elements** on customers' perceptions in relation with Ranelagh Launderette personnel.

To observe the impact on the following reliability situations for customer's satisfaction and the ability to perform the promised service:

- Attitudes on solving customer problems
- Service deliverance: time, and promised premises.
- The accomplishment of the business vision and mission.
- Natural willingness to help the customer.
- Records kept efficiently.

3. To evaluate the SERVQUAL **responsiveness dimension elements** and its influence on customers' perceptions in relation with Ranelagh Launderette.

To observe the influence from Ranelagh Launderette personnel communication and how they influence the customer's perception:

- Willingness of the personnel to support and provide accurate information to the customer.
- Willingness to respond with accurate solution for the customer's problems or inquiries.
- To provide prompt service.

4. To analyze the SERVQUAL **assurance dimension elements** and how influences on the customer's perception in Ranelagh Launderette.

To have the understanding of how this influence the customers perception:

- The employees are courtesy and credible with the customers.
- The employees have the ability to convey trust and confidence to the customers.
- The employee's knowledge and experience level.

5. To evaluate the influence of the SERVQUAL **empathy dimension elements** on customers' perceptions of Ranelagh Launderette.

- The service provider offers accurate attention towards the customer.
- The service provider offers individualized attention to the customers.
- The service provider communicates with the customer.
- The service provider offers convenient hours to customers.

Once that the research objectives have been established, the researcher will attempt to answer the following hypothesis:

*H1*: There is no significant gap between the customer expectations and the customer perceptions regarding to the service quality dimensions.

*H2*: There is a significant gap between the customer expectations and the customer perceptions regarding to the service quality dimensions.

### **3.3 Research Design and Methodology**

The purpose of this study is to explore in a quantitative and qualitative approach in which customers perceive the service provided by Ranelagh launderette in Dublin, Ireland. To fulfill

this goal, the researcher will refer to the model of the “Research Onion” (figure 7), proposed by Saunders et al. (2009). The six layers that conform this model; shows on the first layer, the research philosophies, continuously shows the research approaches, the research strategies, the time horizons for the research and what options does the researcher use for the data collection. All this is concern for the overall plan of the research which will lead to the researcher to the center on the onion where all the data is collected and analyzed or in another words the end of the research where the questions and hypothesis can have an answer.

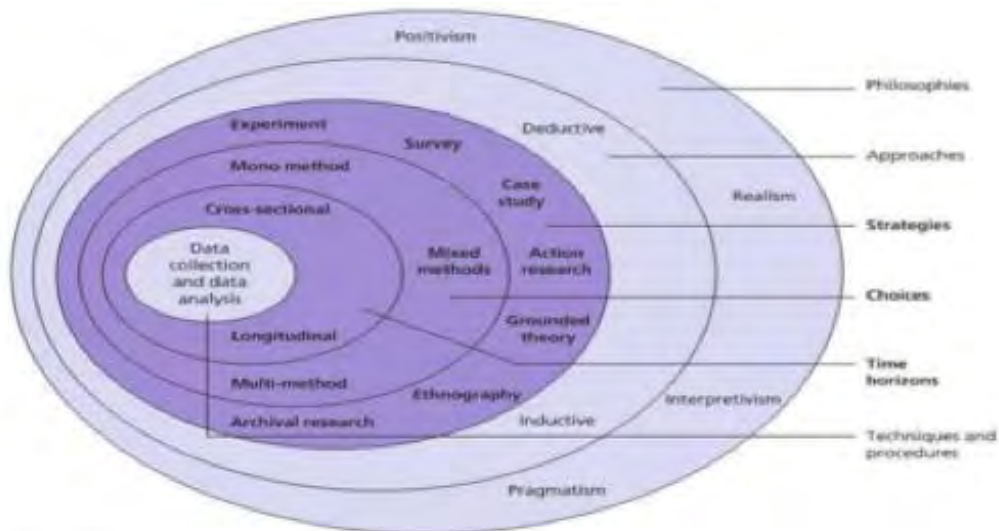


Figure 2. The Onion Research Method. Source adapted from: Saunders, M., Lewis, A., and Thornhill, P. (2011) “Research Methods for Business Students”. Sixth Edition. Prentice Hall.

### 3.3.1 The Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the first layer of the onion, it exposed different philosophical approaches that the study can undertake in orders to accomplish the research strategy regarding to the fulfillment of the research purpose. Therefore Bryman, A. (2008)

says that the term “theory” is used in a variety of different ways, but its most common meaning is an explanation of observed regularities. According to Merton, grand theories offer a few indications to researchers as to how they might guide or influence the collection of empirical evidence. Bryman, A. (2008). As it follows the philosophy the research will adopt will be influenced by practical considerations, however, the main influence is the researcher view on the way research should be conducted.

The Positivism approach will be the one the researcher will reflect, for being the most suitable because according to Bryman, A. (2008) is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond, entailing the following principles:

- Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge.
- Generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed.
- Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws.
- Science must be conducted in a way that is value free (that is objective).

In contrast with the interpretivism were the view of the researchers has been critical of the application of the scientific model to study of the social world and who have been influenced by different intellectual traditions.

Reason why the Positivism is the approach that provide to this study the essential methodology because present the opportunity to gather data and underpinned by a distinction between facts and values, leading to the development of a conceptual framework made up of analytical constructs for analyzing the data collected. (Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2007).

### 3.3.2 The Research Approach

The following layer on the Onion Research method is to identify tools and techniques in order to be able to justify and support the research question. Thereby is necessary to understand the difference between two approaches: the deductive and inductive theories. Which according to Bryman, A. (2009) Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of the relationship between theory and social research. It entails the development of a conceptual and theoretical structure prior to its testing through empirical observation. . Is where the researcher deduces a hypothesis that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny. In contrast, The Induction is where the researcher infers the implications of the findings for the theory that prompted the study; learning by reflecting upon particular past experiences and through the formulation of abstract concepts, theories and generalization that explain the past and predict future observations. The format of this explanation and prediction is that A causes B, or a variation in A causes variation in B, this provides the initial point of departure for the ensuing critique that justify inductivism in the social sciences supported by Gill, J. and Johnson, P. (2002).

According Saunders et al. (2009) Deductive research can be quicker to complete, albeit that time must be devoted to setting up the study prior to data collection and analysis. Considered it can be a lower-risk strategy, this is the reason why the research approach will refer to deduction, because it can develop a theory in order to achieve the objectives, Collis and Hussey (2003) points out that with the basis of explanation, allow the anticipation and predict their occurrence and therefore permit to the researcher to control the study. ( Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, pp 124).

### **3.3.3 The Research Strategy**

Saunders et al. (2009) emphasizes that the research design is the general plan of how it will go about answering the research questions having clear objectives, derived from the research questions, specify the sources from which it intends to collect data and consider the constraints the research will have.

In addition, with the definition proposed by Saunders, the research method is simply a technique for collecting data. It can involve a specific instrument, such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watch others (Bryman, A and Bell, E. 2008, pp 40). For this research, it will be applied the survey research, that employs a cross-sectional research design and in which data is collected by questionnaire or by structured interview. The justification is based on the research questions and objectives. The survey strategy is related with the deductive approach and is commonly used in business and management research; in addition, data collection can be used to suggest possible reasons for particular relationships between variables and to produce models of these relationships.

In the literature, we can found that surveys provide a cheaper, quicker, efficient and accurate way to collect data and assessing information and control in regards the study population. For the reason explained before the surveys will be delivered to the customers and personnel of Ranelagh Launderette with the purpose to obtain information about the perceptions in quality service.

Kumar, R. (2014) states the advantages of a questionnaire is a less expensive and convenient resource when it is administered a collectively to a study population, also express that a questionnaire increase the like hood of obtaining accurate information. Supported by Cameron, S. and Price, D. (2009) that says questionnaires are relatively cheap to produced and requires much less time to administer than individual interviews or focus groups. According to the researcher limitations in the economic resources and time, the questionnaire method offers suitability to carry out the study.

However there are some disadvantages that are worthy to revise and it can be explained as it follows:

Limited application: One main disadvantage is that the application is subjected to the study population profile, education level and understanding of the questions to be asked. Identifying the right people to provide relevant information is crucial. Cameron, S. and Price, D. (2009).

Low response rate: One of the most damaging limitations, the response rate depends upon a number of factors, as the interest of the sample in the topic of the research, the number of questions, how clear the questions are. However, the response rate is not a problem when a questionnaire is administered in a collective situation and not like a postal questionnaire. Kumar, R. (2014).

Lack of opportunity to clarify issues: when respondents may not fully understand the questionnaire, meaning different respondents interpret questions differently, this will affect the quality of the information provided.

### **3.3.3.1 Data Collection Instruments**

For this research, the SERVQUAL model (as was explained in the chapter 2) will be used, it plans to be divided in two parts separating from the question that apply for the customer profile from the ones that applies to the service provider taking in consideration perceptions and expectations (22 questions for each part). Although in the literature it expresses that the SERVQUAL uses the 1-7 range to qualify the answers, in order to gather the most accurate responses, I will diminish from 1-5, which will correspond from strongly, agree to strongly disagree. Because of the time limitation it was assigned to this dissertation, it must have in consideration that having a small data basis will meet the due date while is being analyzed.

The data collection will be scheduled by the Gantt chart technique, in five different days, with small groups of ten each day. These will assess the proper amount of time for each group, which will provide more control on the issues that may arise. Therefore, the method of implementation will be face-to-face.

### **3.3.4 Research choices**

Choosing an appropriate research method may present a substantial challenge for the researcher. On the research onion, proposed by Saunders, M. (2008) refers to three choices: mono method, mixed method and multi-method. Depending on the understanding of each method has to offer and the relationship regarding the context of the research and limitation of resources. This research will use the mono method because after reviewing the methods choices, this is the most suitable since the survey is the only tool used for the data collection.

According to Saunders, et. al. (2009) studies that establish causal relationships between variables may be termed explanatory research. Where, research has a main aim on making emphasis in studying a situation in order to explain the relationship between the variables. Causal Research discovers the effect of one factor on another and it is used to forecast with the help of results that what will influence a business in future (DJSResearch Ltd, 2008). The classification of the research purpose can be more than one and according, to Robson (2002) the purpose of the enquiry may change over time. The researcher proposed the use of and explanatory approach by using quantitative analysis, that will provide and efficient understanding of the responses from the questionnaires in a mathematical way.

### **3.3.5 Time horizons**

The fifth layer of the model it explains that the time horizons in the research design can be: cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies, this will determine the duration of the research or study.

The researcher chooses to have a cross-sectional study, because of the time constrain of the dissertation deadline. According to Saunders et. al (2009) these is the type of study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time. The cross-sectional surveys involve selecting different organizations, in different contexts and investigating how other factors, measured at the same time, vary across this units; identifying general relationships between the organizational structure and other variables such as size and technology. Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P.R. (2008). The questionnaires application will have a specific date, time constrains have been considered.

### **3.3.6 Secondary Research**

According to Cameron, S. and Price, D. (2009) secondary data has been gathered by others, in addition Saunders et. al (2009) says that secondary data include both quantitative and qualitative data. Within business and management research, such data are used in the survey research strategy. It can be useful to compare the findings with the secondary data that have already been collected for some other purpose. This could be, the documentary data: written and non-written materials available in academic databases; following the survey data: census or regular surveys available in government or organizations databases and last the multiple source data: area based or time-series based. For this study, the researcher made usage of written material, mainly academic journals and update publications, EBSCOhost and books.

### **3.3.7 Quantitative data**

The quantitative data allows a statistical analysis in the form of numbers and units to explain the phenomena. Kumar, R. (2014) explains that quantitative research is structured and predetermined in terms of what it wants to finds out about and how. In addition Saunders, M. Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) says that numerical data that could be quantified can help to answer the research question, also often used in management research by establishing statistical relationship between the variables, using the quantitative analysis techniques.

### **3.3.8 Sampling Design**

The researcher has to make a decision about what the sampling unit is, how many sampling units to take, generally speaking, the purpose of collecting the data from a sample is to enable the researcher to make statements about the population that the sample is drawn from. Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Jackson, P.R. (2008). For this research project, the researcher has considered a sampling strategy, taking a proportion of the customers in an organization, which in this case will be the customers who attend to Ranelagh Launderette, that it is located in Ranelagh, Dublin, Ireland. The use of surveys in social research not necessarily have to involve big samples, whatever theoretical issues, the simple fact is that surveys and sampling are frequently used in small-scales research between 30 and 250 cases. Reason why, the size of the sample in this research is 50 customers, that will be chosen by a non-probability sample design, using a convenience sample, “ is one that is simple available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility” (Bryman, A and Bell, E. 2008, pp197). The non- probability sampling methods is not possible to state probability of any member of the population being sampled. Because of the time limitation and economical resources, this was the most suitable way of the data collection. Supporting this Denscombe, M. (2005) quote “ Our time and acces for fieldwork are almost always limited. If we can, we need to pick cases which are easy to get and hospitable to our inquiry” (Stake 1995:4).

### **3.4 Research ethics**

According to Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2008) ethical issues arise at a variety of stages in business and management research. Ethical issues cannot be ignored, in that they relate

directly to the integrity of a piece of research and of the disciplines involved. In addition Saunders et al. (2009) explains that the way it obtains consent, preserve confidentiality, data collection from the participants, and the way the researcher will use and analyze over the report has to be in the avoidance of harm, a way without being intrusive or provoking stress or anxiety in them.

Regarding the key principles in research ethics proposed by Bell and Bryman (2007). All the information collected will be used only for the purpose of research of this dissertation. Therefore, all the data collected will be kept confidentially, and only the researcher or its mentor will have access to the data and analysis, protecting and ensuring confidentiality of the research data.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher will use the computer software Microsoft Excel 2008, for the data analysis and statistics.

### **3.6 Limitations of Methodology**

According to Kumar, R. (2014) limitations are structural problems relating to methodological aspects of the study. The limitations that this research can face are the time limitation of the researcher, or the participants at the time of interviews and surveys, in addition with the lack of commitment of the participants. These limitations can make that the data collection could be delayed or cancel giving a non-accurate result in the analysis of the information.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to expose the details of the data obtained from the primary research method process that was outlined in the research methodology in chapter 3. The quantitative data generated from the questionnaires was analyzed through the computer software Microsoft Excel 2010, explaining the findings for each dimensions of the SERVQUAL framework.

### **4.2 The Questionnaire of the Research**

As was previously outlined in chapter 3, the questionnaire that was used for this research was the SERVQUAL model including the five-dimension framework: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy that was proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithalm and Berry (1988). The questionnaire composed by two sections of 22-item each; the first section comprehends the 22 statements that refer to the customer expectations of excellent service and a second 22-item section that refers to the consumer perceptions of the service. With the usage of the five-point likert scale in each item of the questionnaire, in which 1 was for “strongly disagree”, 2 was for “disagree”, 3 was for “neither agree nor disagree”, 4 was for “agree” and 5 was for “strongly agree”. With this rating scale, a quantitative value was assessed to each objective dimension, measuring either positive or negative response to each statement of the questionnaire. In addition to the 22-items, the questionnaire includes two

more items that will refer to the demographic characteristics of the sample that includes age and gender.

### 4.3 Demographic Analysis

#### 4.3.1 Age

The sample of this research was distributed as it follows according to major incidence illustrated in the table 2. The results show that the majority of the participants are between the age group of the 26-33 years of age, with a total of 18 participants that corresponds to a 36% of the total of the sample, followed by the group of 34-41 and 50 and above, with a total of 11 respondents in each group, representing 22%, then with 6 participants was the group of 42-49 years of age assessing a 12 %, and at last the minor group of the sample with a 8% that refers to 4 participants that are within the group of the 18-25 years of age.

Age Range	Value	Total	%
18-25	1	4	8%
26-33	2	18	36%
34-41	3	11	22%
42-49	4	6	12%
50 and ab	5	11	22%
		50	100%

Table 1 Age

#### 4.3.2 Gender

The results of the questionnaire illustrated in the table 3 shown that the majority of the participants of this research were males with a 62%, while the remaining were females represented by 38% of the total sample.

Gender	Value	Total	%
Female	1	19	38%
Male	2	31	62%
		50	100%

Table 2 Gender

#### 4.4 Comparison between Expectations and Perceptions regarding to the SERVQUAL dimensions

Even though the instrument of measurement SERVQUAL has two separate sections, one for expectations and another one for perceptions, the researcher has decided to create a comparison in between putting them together into graphics to see the differences, in order to asses better understanding of the data and its meaning. It is important to points out that one of the objectives of this researcher is to identify any existing gap between the expectations and perceptions regarding the service provided by Ranelagh launderette. If the value assessed for the gap score is represented as negative the expectations of the customers are not meet by the service provider, in contrast if the value us represented as positive the perceived service exceed the expectations of the customer.

##### 4.4.1 The Tangible Dimension

###### 4.4.1.1 Adequate up-to-date equipment in the launderette service

As is illustrated in the Figure 3, the 62% of the participants' expectations respond "strongly agree" is necessary for a launderette to provide modern equipment being the majority, with 30% that respond "agree" and on the minority responses that does not has an impact is 8% of

participants that are “neither agree nor disagree with this statement. In comparison of the perceptions to these results, we have the majority respond “agree” with a 56%, while a 22% is “strongly agree” and 18% “neither agree nor disagree”.

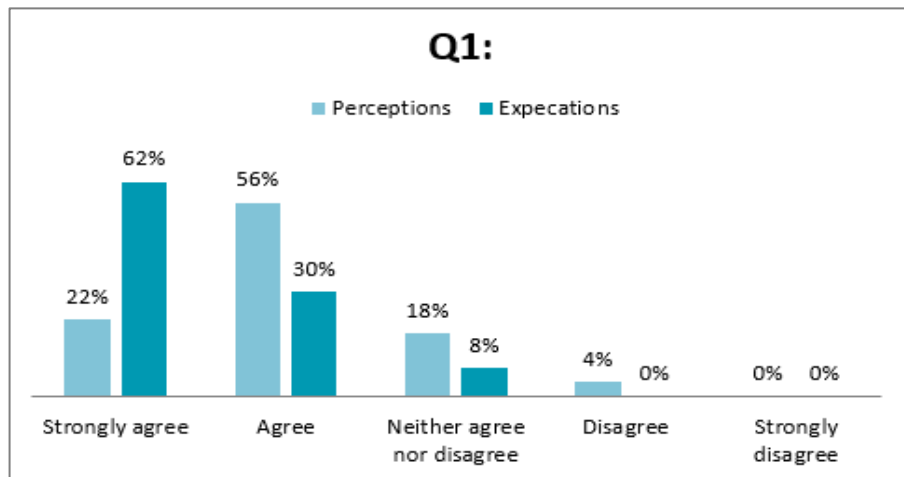


Figure 3: Up-to-date equipment in Ranelagh launderette

#### 4.4.1.2 Appealing physical facilities in the launderette services

Figure 4 show that the majority of the participants’ expectations “agree” with 46% and with a lowest percentage 40% “strongly agree” and 30% held a neutral answer respect to the physical facilities of the launderette. On the perceptions of the participants there was a 42% who agreed, 24% strongly agreed and 10% held a neutral position, however it can also be noticed son negative responses with 4% that disagreed.

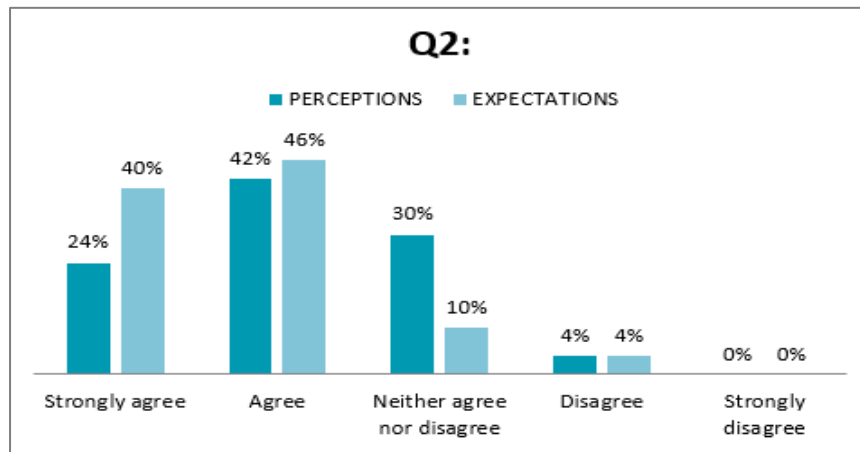


Figure 4: Appealing physical facilities in Ranelagh launderette

#### 4.4.1.3 Employee's appearance in the launderette services

Among the 50 participants 38% of them were strongly agree, 46% agree and 12% were neutral, to the employees appearance regarding to the expectations'. With a 62% strongly agree and 26% agree, and a 12% on neutral answers regarding the perceptions' responses illustrated in the figure 5.

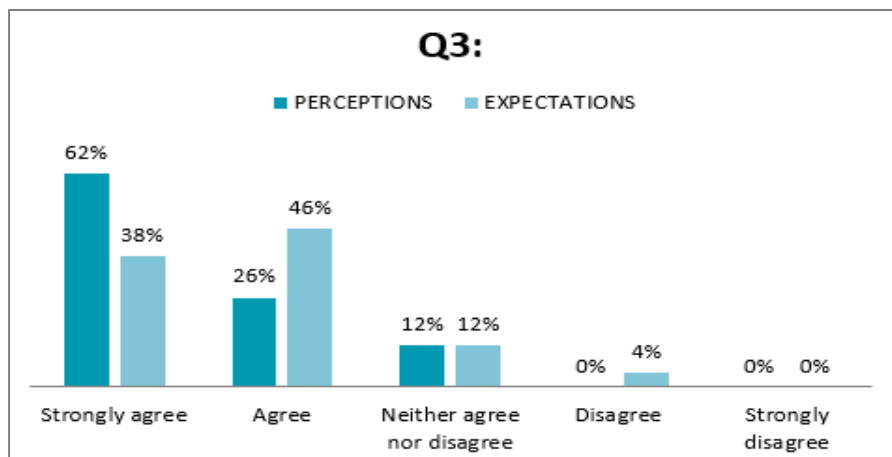


Figure 5: Employees' appearance in Ranelagh launderette

#### 4.4.1.4 Clean environment in the launderette services

As is illustrated in the figure 6, the majority of the respondents “strongly agree” 72% to expect a clean environment, followed by 20% “agree” while only a 2% expects the opposite. On the customers’ perceptions, the majority expressed “agree” 50%, and 46% “strongly agree” to this statement, showing also a 2% of disagreement.

0

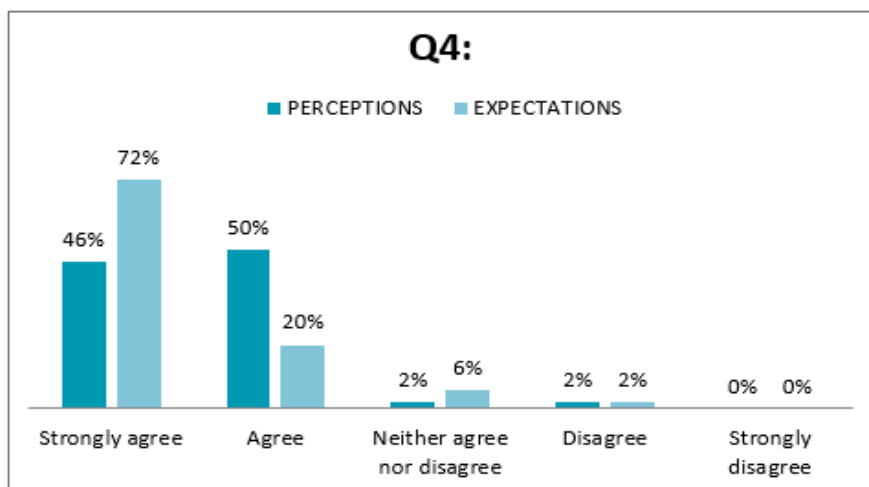


Figure 6: Clean environment in launderette service

#### 4.4.2 Reliability Dimension

##### 4.4.2.1 Willingness to fulfill promises in the launderette services

Among the 50 participants, 80% strongly agree and 18% agree while 2% remain neutral showing no negative responses to the willingness to fulfill promises. With 66% strongly agree and 24% agree and 10% remain neutral regarding the perceptions of this statement represented in Figure 7.

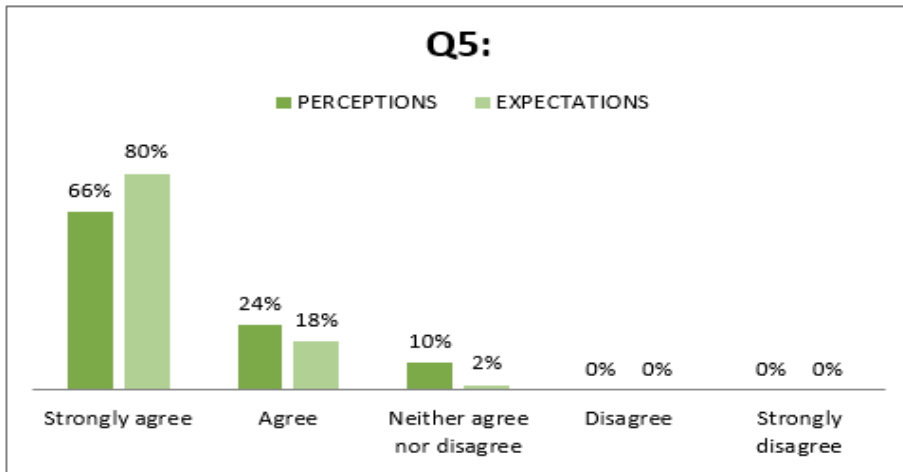


Figure 7: Willingness to fulfill promises in launderette services

#### 4.4.2.2 Willingness to solve customers' problems in the launderette services

The figure 8 show the 60% of the respondent that strongly agree, and 36% agree expecting willingness to solve customers' problems, also in the perceptions can be noticed the 66% for strongly agree and 30% agree with only 2% that strongly disagree to this statement.

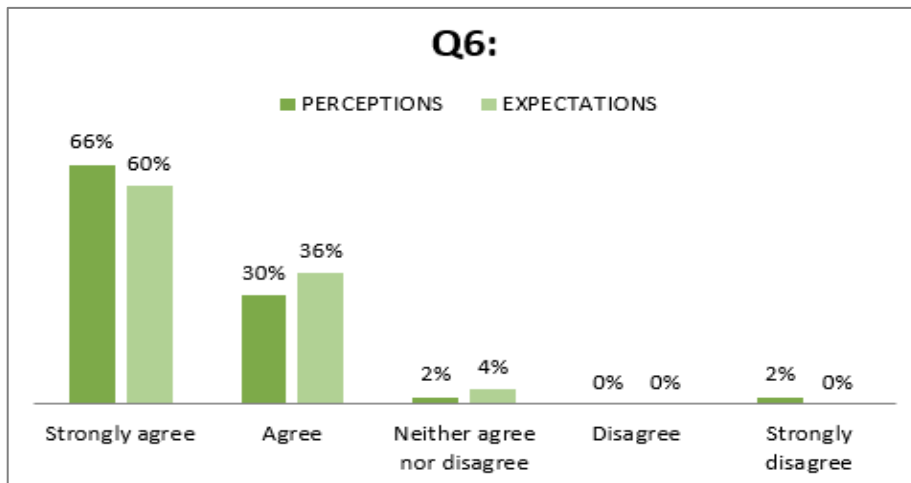


Figure 8: Willingness to solve customers' problems in the launderette services

#### 4.4.2.3 Dependability in launderette services

As is illustrated in the Figure 9 on the expectations section, 70% of the participants “strongly agree”, followed by 26% “agree” and only a 4% with a neutral response. In the perceptions section we have the score of 60% for “strongly agree” and a 32% “agree” also with a minimum respond of 2% for “neutral and disagree” respectively.

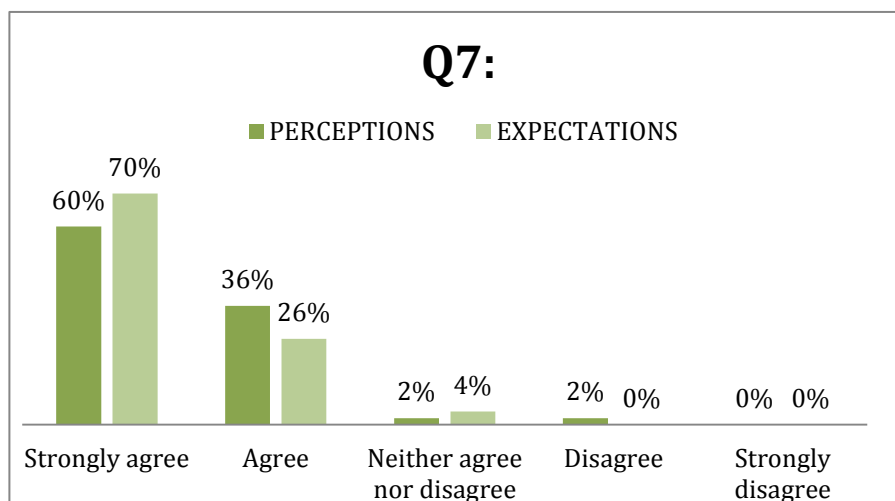


Figure 9: Dependability in launderette services

#### 4.4.2.4 Willingness to provide prompt services in the launderette

Figure 10 show the respondents for expectations with a majority of 68% for “strongly agree” and 28% for “agree” for the ability of the organization to provide a promised service at the promised time. The 62% “strongly agree” and 36% “agree” on the perceived service from the launderette.

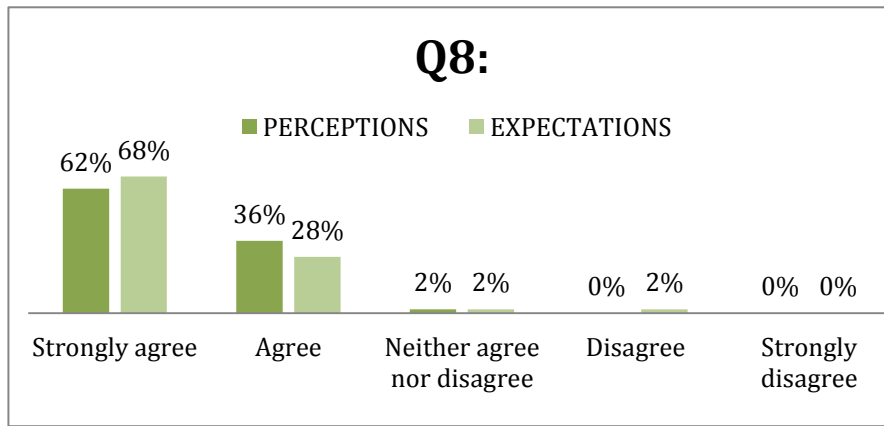


Figure 10: Willingness to provide prompt services in the launderette

#### 4.4.2.5 Records should be kept accurately in the launderette services

Among the total of respondents, it can be seen in the figure 11, customers’ expectations were 58% “strongly agree”, 24% “agree” and 18% remained with a neutral response regarding how the launderette services should kept their record. On the customers perception responses with 56% “strongly agree” followed by a 38% “agree”, with a minor response of 2% “strongly disagree” and only 4% had a neutral response regarding this statement.

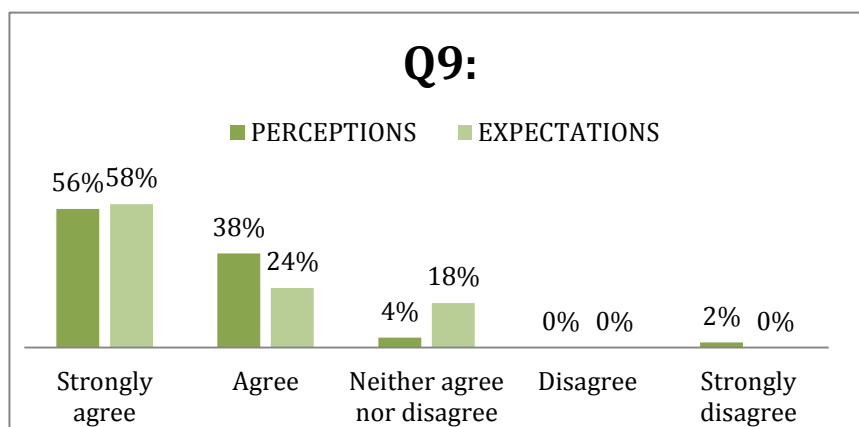


Figure 11: Accurately records in the launderette services

### 4.4.3 Responsiveness Dimension

#### 4.3.3.1 Willingness of the employees in the launderette services to provide information to customers

According to the results in figure 12, the expectations reflect a 58% “strongly agree” being the majority, followed with a 34% “agree” and the frequency of the neutral response obtained an 8%. Regarding the perceptions 38% “strongly agree” and 26% “agree”, although some other expressed to “strongly disagree” with 20%, “disagree” 6% and a neutral response of 10% to this statement.

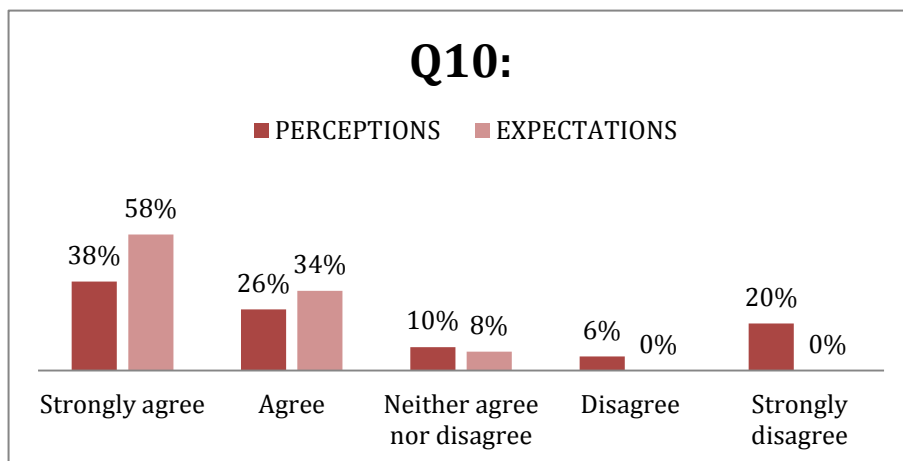


Figure 12: Willingness of employees' to provide information in the launderette services

#### 4.4.3.2 Willingness of the employees to provide prompt service in the launderette services

As is explained in the figure 13, in one hand the customer expectations' expressed a 60% "strongly agree" and a 38% "agree" with the majority of the total responses regarding this statement. In the other hand, the customer perceptions also show a positive response with 64% "strongly agree" and 28% "agree", on the neutral responses for each section it can be noticed a minor response of 2% and 6% respectively.

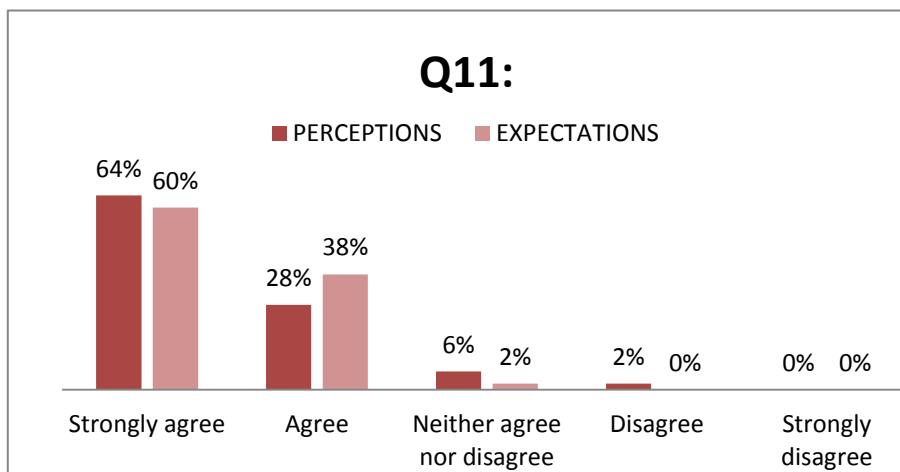


Figure 13: Willingness of the employees' to provide prompt service

#### 4.4.3.3 Willingness of the employees' to provide help

In the figure 14, can be illustrated the responses regarding the customer expectations and perceptions of the employees and their willingness to provide help and assist the customer. In the expectations section with the majority of the responses 58% "strongly agree" followed

with 42% who “agree”. On terms of how the customers perceived this statement in service the majority of the responses also expressed “strongly agree” with 68% and “agree” with 30% showing no responses to dissatisfaction regarding to this statement.

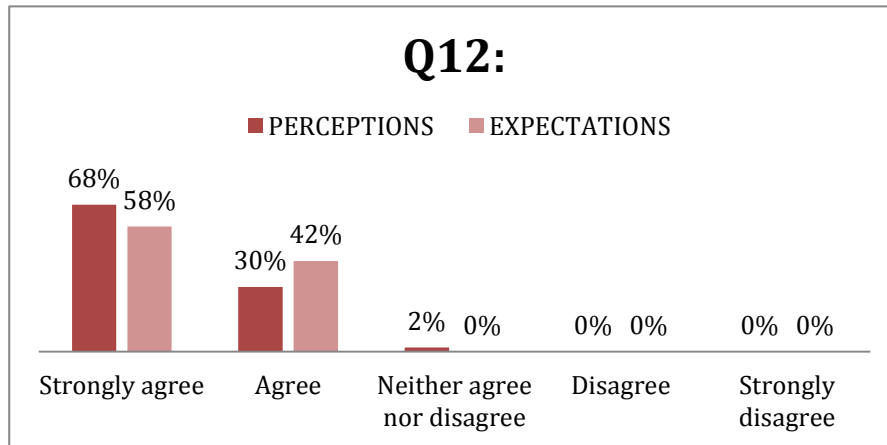


Figure 14: Willingness of the employees' to provide help to the customers

#### 4.4.3.4 Availability of the employees' to assist customers

The figure 15 express the Reponses regarding the availability of the employees' in the launderette services to assist customer's request. In terms of how their expectations, 40% of the participants “agree”, 24% “strongly agree” and with a noticeable level of uncertainty 30% had a neutral response. On their perceptions, 54% of the participants “strongly agree”, 40% “agree”, also the level of uncertainty had 6% and with a minor response of disagreement with 2% regarding to this statement.

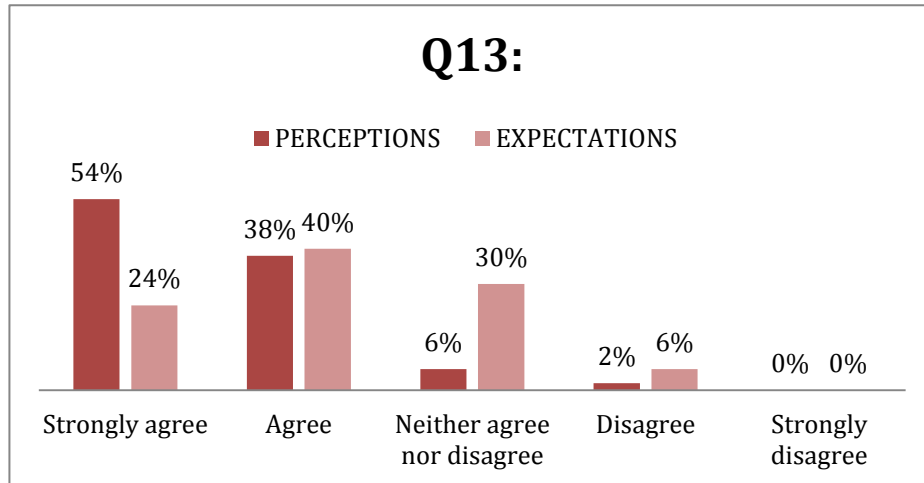


Figure 15: Availability of the employees’ to assist the customers

#### 4.4.4 Assurance Dimension

##### 4.4.4.1 Confidence provided by the employees’ in the launderette services

As is illustrated in the figure 16 the customers’ expectations had a score of 70% “strongly agree” and 22% “agree” regarding to the confidence provide by the employees’ in the launderette services. Also on the perceptions it show a positive response with 74% “strongly agree” and 20% “agree”, and with a neutral response it reflects only a 6% in terms of their experience in the service.

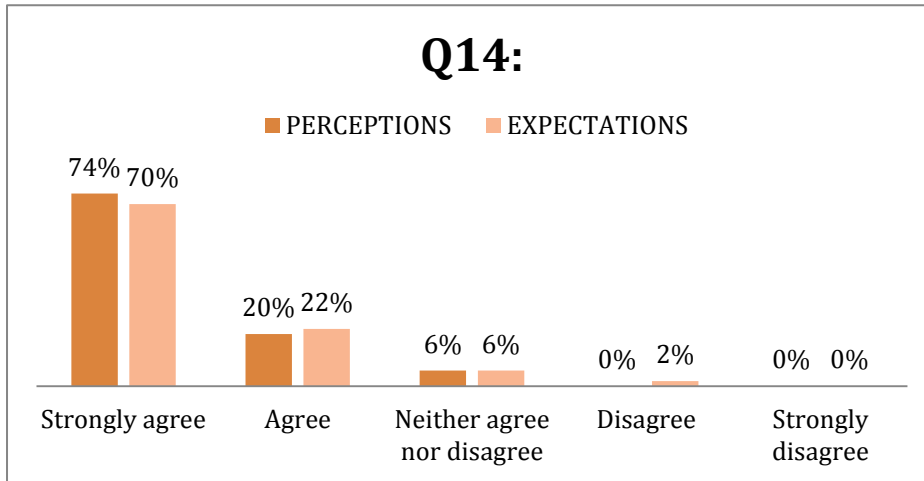


Figure 16: Confidence provided by the employees' in the launderette services

#### 4.4.4.2 Safe transactions in the launderette services

Among the total of respondents as is illustrated in the figure 17, with 74% “strongly agree” and 18% “agree” in regard the customers’ expectations. In the experience and how the participants perceived this statement in the launderette services with the majority 76% selected “strongly agree” and 24% selected “agree” regarding how safe they feel getting involve on the transactions in the launderette services.

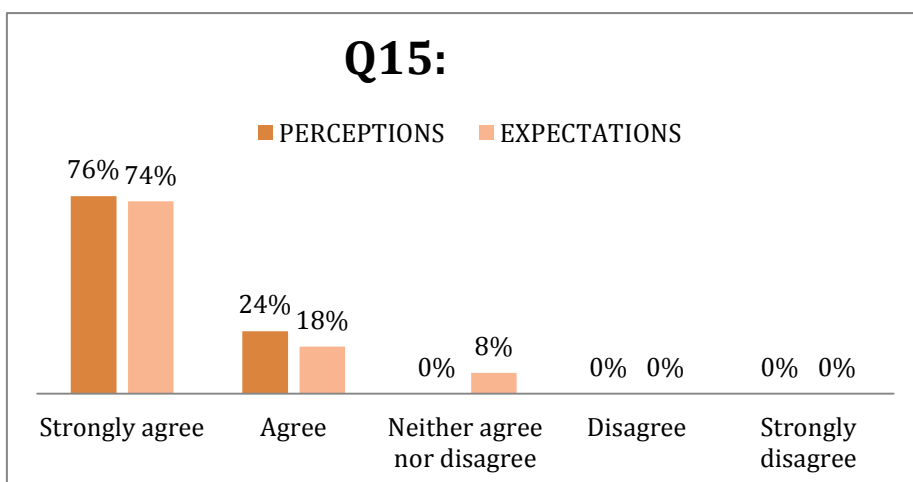


Figure 17: Safe transactions in the launderette services

#### 4.4.4.3 Politeness of the employees in the launderette services

As it shows the figure 18, customers' expect to receive polite attention from the employees' of the launderette with the majority of the responses "strongly agree" with 64% and "agree" with 30% of the total of the participants. Following in the perceptions responses with the similar trend as the expectation section with 78% "strongly agree" and 20% "agree" describing their experience regarding the politeness of the employees' in the launderette services.

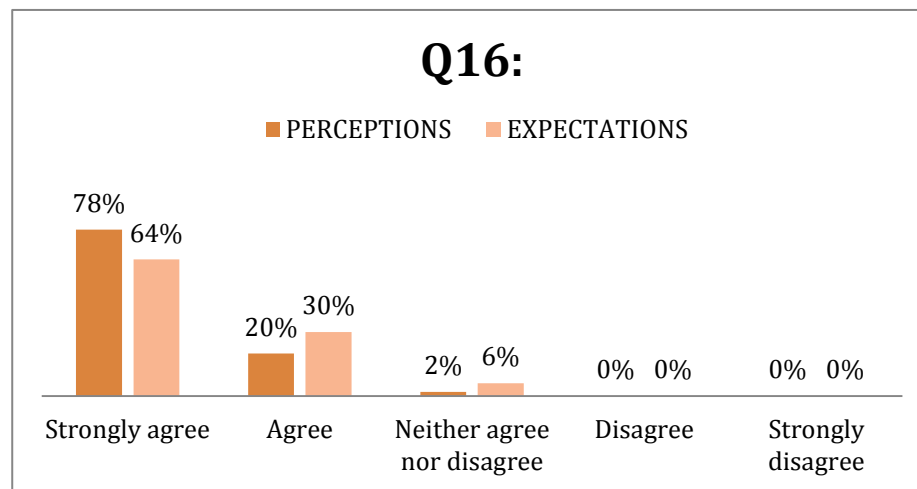


Figure 18: Politeness of the employees' in the launderette services

#### 4.4.4.4 Knowledge and experience of the employees' in the launderette services

In the figure 19, it can be explained the results obtained from the customers' expectations, show the majority of the responses with 68% "strongly agree", followed by a 18 % "agree" and 14% for a neutral response regarding the importance of the knowledge in the employees' providing a service in the launderette. Moving to the perceptions section it can be noticed in

the responses similarities with a 42% who “strongly agree” and 32 % who also “agree”, for the neutral response it was assessed a 22% level of uncertainty in the experienced service.

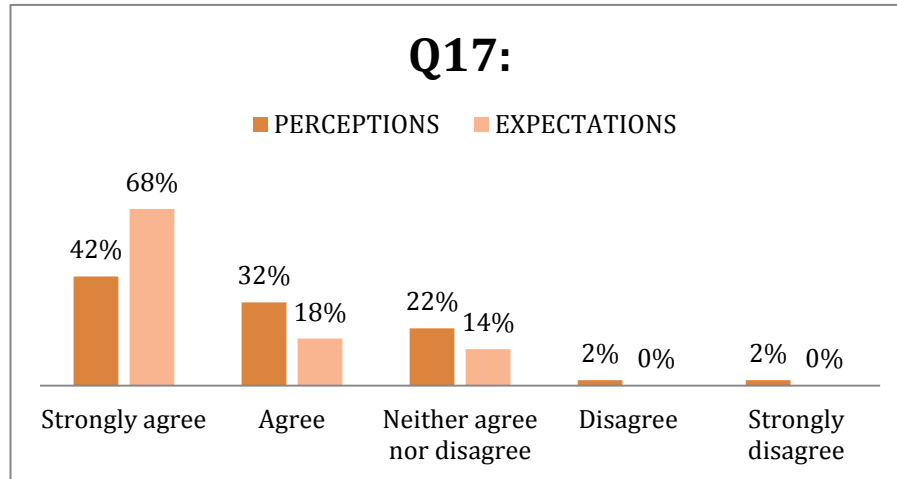


Figure 19: Knowledge and experience of the employees’ in the launderette services

#### 4.4.5 Empathy Dimension

##### 4.4.5.1 Willingness to meet customers’ needs in the launderette services

The results that are illustrated in the figure 20, with a 52% “agree” responses, followed by a 30% who “strongly agree” and 18% of a neutral response regarding the expectations customers’ have regarding the willingness of the service provider to meet their needs. On the perceptions section is presented the results with 46% who “strongly agree”, 26% who “agree” and 28% of a neutral response regarding their experience with the service provider.

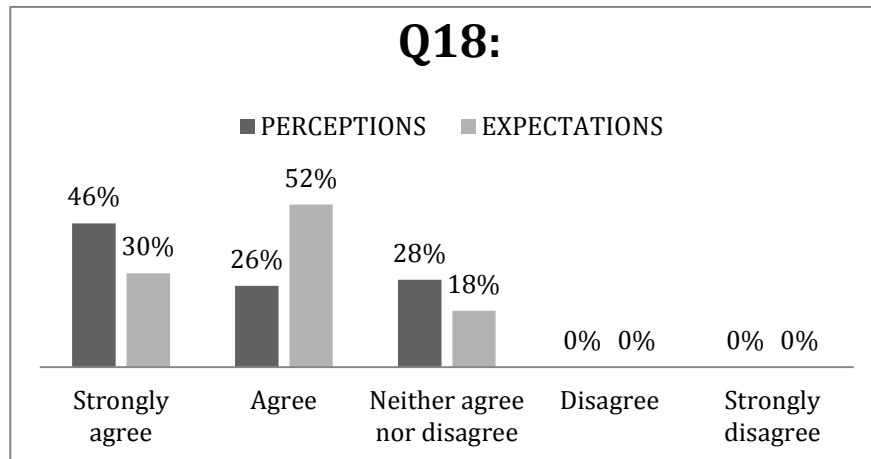


Figure 20: Willingness of the service provider to meet the customers' expectations

#### 4.4.5.2 Individualized attention provided by the launderette services

As can be illustrated in the figure 21, the customers expected to receive an individual and personalized attention as it follows, with the majority of the responses with a 50% “agree”, followed by 26% “strongly agree”, 14% neutral response, showing as well dissatisfaction responses with 6% for “disagree” and 4% for “strongly disagree”. In contrast with a majority percentage for “strongly agree” with 48%, 28% for “agree”, 20% in the neutral responses and only with a 4% for “disagree” in this statement.

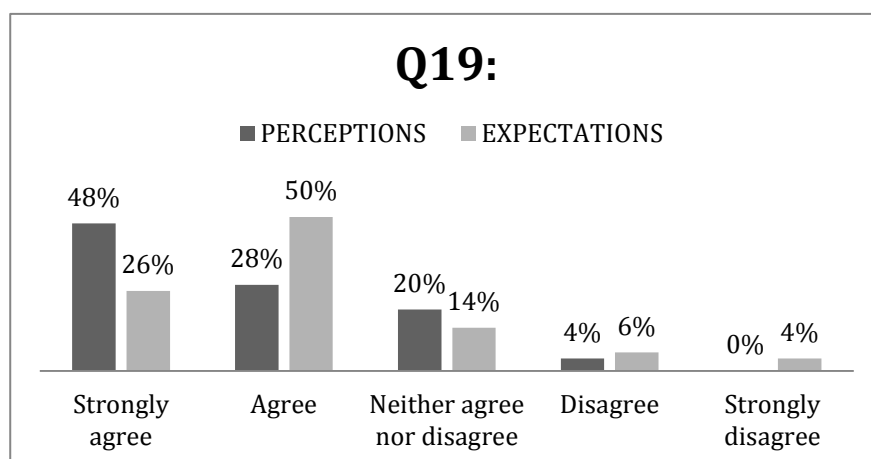


Figure 21: Individualized attention in the launderette services

#### 4.4.5.3 Employees' knowledge in the costumers' needs

The figure 23 shows the customers' expectations of the employee's knowledge in their needs with the majority on the participants who "strongly agree" 34%, then with 28% "agree" , followed by 24% for neutral response and with a negative response 14% for "disagree". In comparison with the perceptions of the same statement, it shows a change with a 58% for "strongly agree", 16% for "agree", 22% for neutral and a lower score of 4% for "disagree" regarding the customers' experience with the service provider.

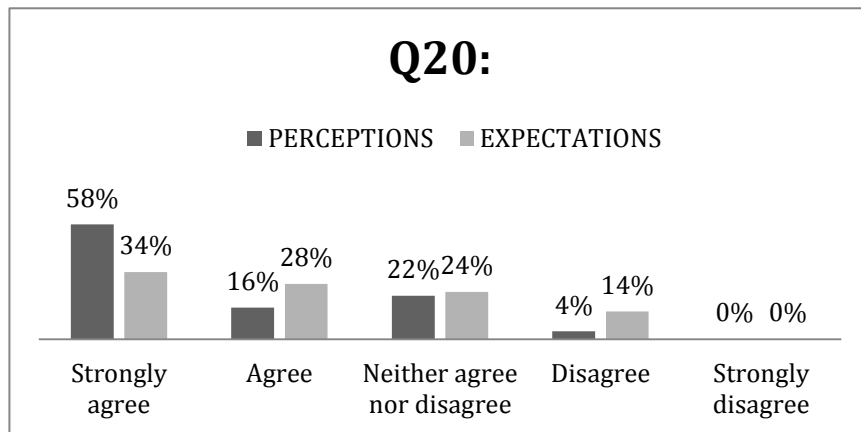


Figure 22: Employees' knowledge in the costumers' needs

#### 4.4.5.4 Best interests' in the customer needs and adequate service

According to the figure 24 that show the expectations of the customers with the total of 54% "agree" responses, 34% "strongly agree" and 10% were neutral, founding only 2% for "disagree" regarding the ability of the service provider to have the best interest for their customers. In the perceptions section with the total of responses 48% who "strongly agree"

being the majority, 38% who “agree” and with a lower score 14% with a neutral response showing no room for disagreement on this statement.

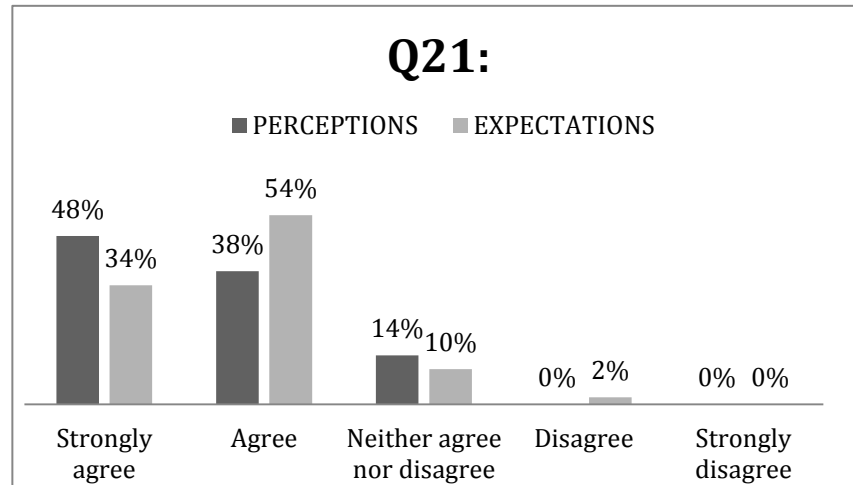


Figure 23: Adequate service and best interest in the customer needs

#### 4.4.5.5 Service operating hours

As can be illustrated in the figure 25, customers’ expectation shows a 40% for “strongly agree”, 36% for “agree” and 22% for a neutral response among the total of respondents, in contrast the perceived opinion regarding the convenience of the operating hours in the launderette shows a high response with 68% for “strongly agree”, 36% for “agree” and only 4% of a neutral response.

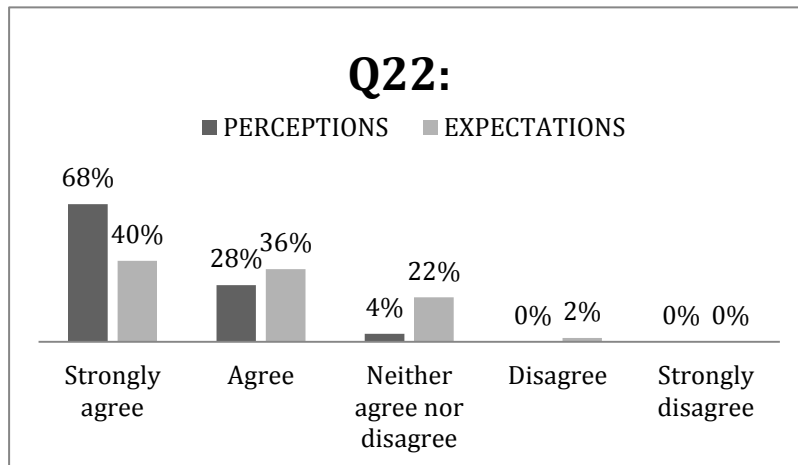


Figure 24: Service operating hours in the launderette services

#### 4.5 Descriptive statistics for each dimension

##### 4.5.1 Tangible Dimension

OBJ 1		Perceptions			
Strongly agree	5	<b>77</b>	38.5	1.925	
Agree	4	<b>87</b>	43.5	1.74	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>31</b>	15.5	0.465	
Disagree	2	<b>5</b>	2.5	0.05	
Strongly disagree	1	<b>0</b>	0	0	
<b>total</b>			200	100	<b>4.18</b>
		Expectations			
Satisfaction					
Strongly agree	5	<b>106</b>	53	2.65	
Agree	4	<b>71</b>	35.5	1.42	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>18</b>	9	0.27	
Disagree	2	<b>5</b>	2.5	0.05	
Strongly disagree	1	<b>0</b>	0	0	
<b>total</b>			200	100	<b>4.39</b>

Table 3: Comparison between the Expectation and Perceptions in the Objective 1

The previous table point the numerical values that were assessed to each point in the likert scale in order to generate a statistical value, and interpret those value to asses a

numerical difference between the customers' expectations against customer' perceptions. In the table 3 it show a value of the mean of 4.39 for the expectations and 4.18 for the mean of perceptions. These results were accomplished by the frequency of the total responses.

OBJ2				
Satisfaction		<b>Perceptions</b>		
Strongly agree	5	<b>155</b>	62	3.1
Agree	4	<b>82</b>	32.8	1.312
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>10</b>	4	0.12
Disagree	2	<b>1</b>	0.4	0.008
Strongly disagree	1	<b>2</b>	0.8	0.008
<b>total</b>			250	100
Satisfaction		<b>Expectations</b>		
Strongly agree	5	<b>168</b>	67.2	3.36
Agree	4	<b>66</b>	26.4	1.056
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>15</b>	6	0.18
Disagree	2	<b>1</b>	0.4	0.008
Strongly disagree	1	<b>0</b>	0	0
<b>total</b>			250	100
				<b>4.548</b>
				<b>4.604</b>

Table 4: Comparison in the customers' expectations and customers' perceptions in the objective 2

The table 4 shows the result of the statistical analysis for the objective two, following the same process explained in the previous sector, the findings were with a value in the mean of 4.604 for the expectations over the 4.548 for the perceptions. This comparison according to the literature review is necessary in order to identify the size of the gap in between the two variable and asses urgency to the matter.

OBJ 3				
Satisfaction		Perceptions		
Strongly agree	5	112	56	2.8
Agree	4	61	30.5	1.22
Neither agree nor disagree	3	12	6	0.18
Disagree	2	5	2.5	0.05
Strongly disagree	1	10	5	0.05
<b>total</b>			200	100
				<b>4.3</b>
Satisfaction		Expectations		
Strongly agree	5	100	50	2.5
Agree	4	77	38.5	1.54
Neither agree nor disagree	3	20	10	0.3
Disagree	2	3	1.5	0.03
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	0
<b>total</b>			200	100
				<b>4.37</b>

Table 5: Comparison between expectations' and perceptions' in objective 3

The table 5 shows the results of the statistical analysis for the objective three, showing a mean value of 4.37 for the expectations' over a 4.3 for the mean value of perceptions'. Where can be noticed the low differences in between the variables, with an irrelevant statistical meaning.

Table 6 Comparison between expectations' and perceptions' in the objective 4

OBJ 4				
Satisfaction		Perceptions		
Strongly agree	5	135	67.5	3.375
Agree	4	48	24	0.96
Neither agree nor disagree	3	15	7.5	0.225
Disagree	2	1	0.5	0.01
Strongly disagree	1	1	0.5	0.005
<b>total</b>			200	100
				<b>4.575</b>
Satisfaction		Expectations		
Strongly agree	5	138	69	3.45
Agree	4	44	22	0.88
Neither agree nor disagree	3	17	8.5	0.255
Disagree	2	1	0.5	0.01
Strongly disagree	1	0	0	0
<b>total</b>			200	100
				<b>4.595</b>

The table 6 contents the findings of the mean for the objective four with a value of 4.595 for the expectations' and 4.575 for the perceptions; once again it can be notice the minimum numerical difference in between the variables.

OBJ 5				
Satisfaction		<b>Perceptions</b>		
Strongly agree	5	<b>134</b>	67	3.35
Agree	4	<b>68</b>	34	1.36
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>44</b>	22	0.66
Disagree	2	<b>4</b>	2	0.04
Strongly disagree	1	<b>0</b>	0	0
<b>total</b>			250	125
				<b>5.41</b>
Satisfaction		<b>Expectations</b>		
Strongly agree	5	<b>82</b>	41	2.05
Agree	4	<b>110</b>	55	2.2
Neither agree nor disagree	3	<b>44</b>	22	0.66
Disagree	2	<b>12</b>	6	0.12
Strongly disagree	1	<b>2</b>	1	0.01
<b>total</b>			250	125
				<b>5.04</b>

Table 7 Comparison in between expectations' and perceptions' in the objective 5

The table 7 presents the findings for the customers' expectations with a value in the mean of 5.04 and the mean value for the perceptions of 5.41.

	Expectation	Perception	Gap
Attributes	mean	mean	(per-exp)
OBJ1	4.39	4.18	-0.21
OBJ2	4.60	4.55	-0.06
OBJ3	4.37	4.30	-0.07
OBJ4	4.60	4.58	-0.02
OBJ5	5.04	5.41	0.37

**Table 8 Numerical value for the gap variance**

The following table 8, represent the numerical difference in between customers' expectations and perceptions. In the objective one the value for this gap was -0.21 in the objective two was 0.06, then the objective three presented a value of -0.07, followed by the value for objective four of -0.02 which was the lowest score assessed in comparison. The objective on the other hand presented a positive value of 0.37 which as is going to be explained with more detailed in the chapter of conclusions the perceive service overpassed the customers' expectations.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter has the aim to provide an answer to the research question in which each finding obtained through primary research (questionnaires) was related to each of the research objectives presented in chapter 3. According to Saunders et al (2009), the main purposes of the conclusion chapter are “answering the research question, meeting the objectives and if appropriate, supporting or otherwise the research hypothesis”. (Saunders et al, 2009; p. 538). In addition with the analysis of the results that were presented on the previous chapter the researcher has the purpose to develop a proper conclusion for this investigation, supporting this conclusions with the secondary research (the literature review) being able to offer some recommendation for further investigations that can be related with this study.

### **5.2 Research Question and Research Objectives**

As the researcher explained in previous chapters the main objective for this study was to apply the SERVQUAL instrument in the customers of Ranelagh launderette in order to determine their general level of satisfaction regarding the service, being more specific this investigation identified the existence of gaps in between the provided by the comparison of their expectation with how they perceived the service.

#### **5.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the sample**

Age group: It is vital for the organization to understand the different age groups belong to their customers, because each age group have different needs and wants. The researcher decided to create five age groups: 18-25, 26-33, 34-41, 42-49 and 50 and above. According to the results illustrated in the table 1, the group age with the majority of responses was from 26-33 years of age with 36%; this group is considered by the researcher by the professionals, with a profile of business people with high restrictions in time availability. Followed by the

group of 34-41 and 50 and above years of age with 11% each group; this group is considered has the senior professional with moderate restrictions in time availability. Is information's is relevant to the organization for the development of strategies and approaches in the service performance.

Gender: the total of the sample of this investigation were 50 customers from the Ranelagh launderette in Dublin, Ireland. The results of this sample showed that the majority, were males with 62%, and the female group showed a 38%, this data is also important for the organization's strategy due to that they have different needs

In addition to the general results the researcher created the five research objectives in order to facilitate the explanations of the answer for the research question. These five objectives and their respective conclusion will be explained below:

**1. To describe the influence of the SERVQUAL tangible dimension on customer's satisfaction from Ranelagh Launderette.**

This objective has the aim to describe the influence of the tangible dimension between what they perceive and what they expect regarding to the service provider, that according to Sanchez-Hernandez, R., Martinez, V. Peiro, J. and Ramos, J. (2009) in their recent publication they highlight the importance of the tangible dimension due to the functional interaction in between customers' and employees'. On the first item of the questionnaire where the purpose was to investigate if the equipment provided by the launderette was considered modern and adequate, the overall results show a 62% for expectations over a 56% for perceptions showing a level of moderate satisfaction where the perceptions did meet the expectations. In this regard, the equipment of the launderette should not be motive of concern for the management. The second item was the physical appearance of the employees' the result

showed a 46% for expectations over 38% for perceptions which acknowledge the fact that customers feel satisfied with the employees' to whom they interact. The following items are the physical environment and the cleanliness of it; which according to the results the expectations of the customers match with the perception in the general physical appearance. Thus, for the cleanliness the expectations are higher than the perceptions, creating an opportunity for the management of the organization to improve by the schedules and frequency paying more attention in this regard.

Creating a general evaluation, the customers of the Ranelagh launderette feel satisfied with the tangible dimension of the SERVQUAL model, with not relevant gap in between expectations and perceptions statement that was supported by the findings.

## **2. To evaluate the influence of the SERVQUAL reliability dimension elements on customers' perceptions in relation with Ranelagh Launderette personnel.**

The reliability dimension as was mentioned in chapter 2, the ability of the organization to provide the service as they promised in the external communications. The findings obtained from the primary research show that the majority of the customers feel very satisfied, demonstrated by the irrelevant gap in between what they expect and what they perceived. More specifically, on the first item where the ability of the organization to fulfill their premises was evaluated showed a 62% of the perceptions over 46% of the customer expectations, point out the level of commitment on behalf the organization. On the next item was evaluated the ability of the organization to solve the problems presented by its customers, the 66% of the perceived service over 60 % of the expected service show a low difference in between these two variables, which means the customers' of the launderette feel satisfied. The third item evaluated how dependable is the service in the launderette with 70%

in expectations over 60% of perceptions, demonstrate the consistent effort the launderette has throughout the time. In the last item questioned the ability of the launderette to kept records in a correct way, with a 68% of expectations over 62% of perceptions, results that shows once again a level of satisfaction. The awareness of this dimension on behalf the organization is crucial as Landrum, H., Zhang, X., Prybutok, V. and Peak, D. (2009) state the importance of this dimension, arguing specially the customers that are under stress may demand speed and reliability, finding this dimension in their research as the most important.

### **3. To evaluate the SERVQUAL responsiveness dimension elements and its influence on customers' perceptions in relation with Ranelagh Launderette.**

According to Minkyun, K., Nallan, S. and Hillmer, C (2013) pointed out in their research that this dimension is vital for the organization strategy because it gives a helpful way to overcome dynamic and competitive business environments due to the responsiveness that provides market flexibility. The findings regarding this objective show on the first item was explore the willingness of the organization to fulfill their promises with a high score of 80% in expectations over 66% for perceptions. In these results, it can be understood that the expectations are a little high regarding to the perceived service, although there is not a significant difference but it is recommendable for the organization to be aware of the progress of this item over time. Concerning the following item the willingness of the organization to solve the customers' problems the results show a 66 % in perceptions over 60% in expectations assessing a satisfactory result, indicating that the organizations has the adequate approach regarding customers' problems. The third item is regarding a prompt service with 68% expectations over a 62% perceptions, there is not a significant difference expressing satisfaction on the customers' behalf. The last item dimension is the willingness of the employees to provide the right information's to the customers, with a difference of 2%

between the variables close to a zero gap which according to Parasuraman, Zeithalm and Berry, 1988) the expectations were met by the service provider. In the overall results, the customers feel satisfied regarding the responsiveness dimension of Ranelagh launderette.

#### **4. To analyze the SERVQUAL assurance dimension elements and how influences on the customer's perception in Ranelagh Launderette.**

As a recent study by Birgül, Ç. and Köksa, S. (2014) highlighted the importance of this dimension arguing that the employees should convince their customers that they are qualified to provide the service, possessing the required knowledge to perform their duties. The aim of the fourth objective is to explore those factors that influence on customers' perceptions regarding to quality in the service provided by the launderette. Bearing this in mind the first item possess a high score with a 74% of perceptions over 70% of expectations, showing a level of satisfaction among the customers regarding the confidence provided by the employees of the launderette. The following item is the safeness regarding the transactions of the launderette, with a score of 76% in perceptions over 70% in expectations' once again exceed the customer expectations' providing a level of satisfaction in this regard. The third item of the assurance dimension is to evaluate how polite the staff is when the service is provided; the figures show 78% in perceptions over a 64% in expectations. The positive trend in this dimension highlights the fact, that the organization's employees have the necessary skills to deal with situations providing the service as it was promised. The last item of this dimension, showed an statement worth of discussion, with 68% expectations score over 42% perceptions score, demonstrate the high level of expectations causing some dissatisfaction among customers regarding the knowledge and experience of the launderette employees. Creating a gap of opportunity for the organization to modify and improve the training process

to its personnel, expressing that the staff is seen as inexperienced and with a lack of knowledge regarding the service. In the overall conclusion for this objective, it can be noticed that customers are satisfied with the service provider. Although, the organization should be aware of the red flag presented in the last item, and focus on develop and improve their personnel skills in the near future.

**5. To evaluate the influence of the SERVQUAL empathy dimension elements on customers' perceptions of Ranelagh Launderette.**

According to Mekoth, N., Babu, G., Dalvi, V., Rajanala, N. and Nizomadinov, K. (2011) who stated that the empathy dimension has a direct impact in the attitudinal loyalty and purchase intentions as the quality process outcome is more emotional. In this regard, the aim of this objective is to measure the influence on customers in the empathy dimension. The first item in this section refers to the willingness of the service provider to meet the customers' expectations with a score of 46% in the perceived service against the 30% of the expectations confirmed the interest that the service provider has in regard of their customers. The next item is to evaluate how personalized is the attention provided during the service encounter, with 48% in perceptions against the 26% of expectations, which means that the employees provide special care to their needs and the customers feel satisfied. The third item refers to the knowledge the service provider has on their customer needs, this outcome was remarkable showing a 58% on the perceived service over a 34% in the expected service. When this results appear on the profile of the organization somehow provide advantage against competitors, because the staff of the launderette understand the specific needs of their customers. The following item is to measure the rate of response on the safe transactions and best interest in regard its customers with a score of 48% in perceptions against 34% of the

expectations. The point of view of the customers is that the business instead of focusing in a profitable return, they prefer to focus on keep customers satisfied by choosing the best service for them according their needs. The last item is the service operating hours, once again the researcher found positive results with a score of 68% on the customers' perceptions against 40% of their expectations, clearly the service provide understand their customers offering suitable operating hours that will match their needs finding the service flexible.

In the general perception of the research objectives it ca be said that were reached with success, providing valuable data to be analyzed in relation to the existing literature in order to reach competitive advantage following the guideline this investigation provides. After a detailed explanation of the finding and results from the questionnaires it can be said that the H1 of this research is accepted, this hypothesis state, that there is no significant gap between the customer expectations and the customer perceptions regarding to the service quality dimensions. As was explained previously, after carrying this study, the researcher can state that in general, the service quality perceived by the customers regarding to the service provided by Ranelagh launderette is seen as satisfactory. Although the detailed analysis presented some shortfalls in practical implications providing to the organization management a clear direction on how to address the resources for improve the service quality.

### **6.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

Due to the time constraint the researcher face during the research process influencing the sample size, with only 50 respondents, this limitation can have an impact on the accuracy of the results, reason why the researcher suggest to study a larger sample size in order to have a better range for investigation. In addition, one person carried out this research, when the

research is dealing with great amount of data gathering as the SERVQUAL, is recommendable to take the study among several researchers in order to expand the range and include the qualitative approach to have a better understanding on the customer behavior in the findings.

Another recommendation, according with the existing literature and the researcher experience in the investigation, it can be useful to measure the expectations and perceptions in different stages of the service encounter, in order to obtain more reliable results regarding each section. Moreover, the last recommendation is two consider on taking more organizations in order to have a comparative analysis in the same subject area but with different perspectives in order to gather information that is more specific.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion and Self-reflection**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The importance of reflection in deep learning can be underpinned not just as an add-on-extra to the academic learning, as Moon (2005) refers, reflection is an essential component of good quality learning and representation of that learning. According to Honey, P. (2008) learning is the most important capability simply because it is the gateway to every other capability it is possible to develop, in other words the process of learning underpins everything. Because of the changing environment we are in, people have to develop the necessary skills in order to adapt to changing circumstances. In addition, Cotrell, S. (2008) points out that a reflective, active, self-evaluating approach to learning develops deeper understanding in the long term. Learning is a natural process usually associated with practical experience; scholars can grow and mature through learning being the primary educational goal on the higher education. (Payne, E. and Whittaker, L. 2006). The chapter six identifies and details the researcher's development learning plan during the experiences of the Master of Business Administration course (MBA) as well as the dissertation process.

### **6.2 The learning style**

According to Carter, et al. (2005) Students process information in different ways and have different styles of interaction with others, the thinking skills and the ability to process information with its strengths and weakness that may include. By developing the awareness of the own learning style, the effective learning can be fulfilling. Following the experimental learning model proposed by Kolb (1984) in which describes a four-stage cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation) to

explain learning. Arguing that learners, test concepts through actions, as an integrated process and modify them as a result of experiences.

Based in this model Honey, P. and Mumford, A. (2000) develop the four learning styles model, this framework explain that every style will depend on each student process learning in order to match the situation experienced. The four learning styles are explained below:

*Activist:* Activists prefer to learn by experimentation, by doing and trying something at least once. They have an open-minded approach to learning involving themselves fully into new experiences. The passionate personality of these learners likes the focus of attention to be on them, reason why these learners are perfect to perform in-group activities because of their extroverted nature.

*Reflector:* These learners prefer the observation. Because of their cautious nature, they need to collect information putting things into perspective before coming to a conclusion, in contrast to the activist that have an impulse approach. This learning style could be considered as unable to make quick decisions because of their philosophy of think first, act later.

*Theorist:* The preference for abstract conceptualization, trying to understand the theory behind the actions, using a systematical and logical approach, these perfectionists cannot rely in things that do not fit into a rational scheme. They prefer to work alone at their own pace.

*Pragmatist:* Considered as the problem-solver by nature, these learners need a concrete experience in real time, with a practical approach to make things work, their philosophy is trial and error, with a curiosity on finding new ideas looking to try new techniques or theories.

According to Carter, C. et al. (2005) knowing the way the scholar learns helps them to choose the appropriate techniques that will suit their needs. Because no student will think and learn in the same way based on their personality spectrum, for each personally spectrum exist different techniques that will improve the performance. Based on the four-stages learning styles, 40-item questionnaire results of Honey, P. and Mumford, A., the learning style of the researcher is an *activist*. This because the researcher prefers to learn by active experimentation, instead than analyzing theories first like a theorist would do. Regarding this statement a recent study made by Black, S. G. and Kassaye, W. (2014), in the “*Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*”. States that students from business disciplines, tend to have a combination of active experimentation and abstract conceptualization learning styles, arguing that this tendency in learning styles impact their selection of the course alternatives, as well as the student performance. The process of the Master Business Administration, specifically the dissertation stage, gave the opportunity to the researcher to focus beyond her capabilities, with a deep understanding and analysis, in order to improve.

### **6.3 The Master Business Administration**

The program of the master was presented to the researcher two years ago when she was contemplating the idea to take a big decision and move to a different country alone where the native language it was not the same as the researcher. Even though the background of the researcher is not compatible with the profile of the program, she always had in mind the idea of expanding her horizons into something that will nourish her personal and professional profile, this was a life-changing decision, it was the most difficult change the researcher faced but nevertheless the most rewarding experience she ever had.

On the early stages of the master degree, she acknowledge the fact of the differences between the Anglo-Saxon education system and her country; specially on the research field and the level is require in each assignment of the program. The level of education of the researcher was considered as low even though she had a bachelor degree, regarding to its academic knowledge that was only based in exams and taking regular classes. Thus, the Master Business Administration program truly gave an insight of the basic principles of academic research, finding benefits from it.

The researcher found that being a foreign student; represent one of the greatest challenges in the MBA, considering the language and the intercultural differences. However, the international profile of Dublin Business School, help her in order to find fellow students with the same problems providing support. The researcher had to develop new skills to have an open-mind and a better approach when it comes into solving problems in stressful situations. Now that the program is finished, the influence the researcher acquired provides a better understanding of the options available for her on the international business environment.

#### **6.4 The Dissertation**

From the very begging when the concept of the dissertation was presented on the first semester of the MBA, the confusion regarding selecting an appropriate topic, the researcher had to explore through all her personal interest areas that consist on the identification of the research problem area and the research questions. For the researcher this was related to topics like Consumer behavior, customer satisfaction and business strategy because of the experience she had by working in the hotel industry. This was the concrete experience and the reflective observation process according to the model proposed by Kolb (1984) following those phases the researcher enter into the abstract conceptualization, by reviewing the existing literature regarding to the topics mentioned before, the research proposal was

developed where the initial research objectives and hypothesis were presented. From the proposal feedback, it was highlighted some concerns that the researcher have not considered in early stages, nevertheless the perspective her mentor Ann Masterson, a senior lecturer of Dublin Business School helped the researcher to refine the research objectives. After several structured meetings, Ann Masterson was always checking the progress made by the researcher making this process highly motivating without losing the aim at any stage. In total, there were four live meetings during the whole dissertation process, but the researcher always find her mentor available to consult any question or problem via e-mail.

For the last four months and in the last stage of the dissertation the active experimentation was where the researcher had to involve the fieldwork and be able to provide an answer to all the research objectives and questions. In the overall process, the MBA and the dissertation itself were the most challenging experience the researcher has undertaken, but at the same time, the most useful one.

#### **6.4.1 Crucial skills**

Reading Skills: Reading was the fundamental skills that the researcher had to develop, from the very start of the Master business administration program, it was introduced the academic work such as essays and assignments, where the information was not available on the first instance. The skill of reading has as a principal objective to gather information in order to understand a subject. The lack of this skill on the researcher profile at the beginning of this program made the process a complex and difficult experience. Although, developing this set of skills, the researcher will have the opportunity to perform with confidence in the research areas, where the need of reading performance is necessary.

Research skills: As was mentioned before, the MBA program have a vast content of essays and assignments that need to be supported by extensive research from reliable sources, even

though this sound like a easy process to achieve, in practice is a different experience. For the researcher this was the skill that marked a before and an after in the MBA. She had no knowledge about where to begin, due to the wide range of resources available (journals, databases, articles, books) the frustration and confusion where something that complicates things even more. Despite the challenge, she tried to focus on her research methods classes in order to have the best learning from it. To have the research skill, will not only improve in research and analysis field, but on the daily basis having a better understanding of common theories used on the business environment.

Time management skills: Because of the profile of the researcher, this skill was easy to develop, in comparison to the two skills mentioned above. Throughout the whole program of the master, the researcher had to combined a full-time course with a full-time job making crucial every minute that the researcher had available. Assessing the right amount of time and commitment to each thing, help the researcher to achieve her program with satisfaction. These set of skills, will enable the researcher to perform effectively and efficiently in the work environment.

Communication skills: When it refers to the dissertation stage, this crucial skill was necessary to develop, in order to communicate effectively through written communication all the ideas and theories reviewed in the literature and the findings from the data collection. The researcher had the language barrier, which means that she was non-native English speaker, this create a barrier in the way she process the information and understand the vast contents in English, translated into comprehensive and analytical ideas from her mind thinking in Spanish to a correct used of grammar in English. In the researcher point of view, this is a key skill that will bring benefits in the future.

*Managing stress skills:* The demands derived from the MBA, the dissertation and from the job the researcher had, made it extremely difficult to balance the mood swings due to the stress, frustration and limitations. Having in mind that this was a personal decision in order to challenged her to be better, a goal that motivated her through taught times. The researcher can express that this skills will help her to achieve every new goal that presents in the future with the improvement of decision-making techniques.

### **6.5 The new perspective**

Without comparison, the researcher had the opportunity to explore a new country, a new culture, and new ways of learning, having an exceptional growth in her personal, professional and academic life. The Process of creating this research in order to accomplish her master degree, gave her the philosophy that nothing is impossible in this life, it may seem difficult at the very beginning, but with commitment and hard work, everything is reachable. Of course, this was not an easy process, it was a road full of bumps, and some of them were true challenges hard to manage. Nevertheless, the life-changing step the researcher achieved with this program will provide confidence feeling more professional and business-focused. With a new perspective of her future, this degree closes one chapter in the researcher professional life, with excitement and very proud of herself she will look forward for bigger challenges, hoping this not to be the last.

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## APPENDICES

**1. PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Please, put a cross (x) on your choice of answer.

Gender:    Female                      Male

Age 18-25    26-33    34-41    42-49    50 and above

**2. EXPECTATIONS:** This section is about your **EXPECTATIONS** or opinions of the launderette services.

Please, show the extent to which you think firms offering laundry services should possess the following features. Do this by circling **ONLY ONE** of the five numbers next to each statement. If you strongly agree that these firms should possess a feature, circle number 5. If you agree, circle number 4. If you neither agree nor disagree circle 3. If you disagree circle number 2, and if you strongly disagree, circle 1. There are no right or wrong answers, all I am interested in is a number that best shows your **EXPECTATIONS** about the launderettes services.

STATEMENT	SCORES
1. Ideal launderettes should have up-to-date equipments	1    2    3    4    5
2. Their physical facilities (tables, chairs, counters, fridges, lights) should be visually appealing.	1    2    3    4    5
3. Their employees should be well dressed and appear neat.	1    2    3    4    5
4. The appearance of the physical environment of the launderette should be clean.	1    2    3    4    5
5. When launderettes promise to do something by a certain time, they should do so.	1    2    3    4    5
6. When customers have problems, launderette firms should be sympathetic and reassuring.	1    2    3    4    5
7. Launderettes should be dependable (service quality/standards consistent)	1    2    3    4    5
8. Launderettes should provide their service at the time they promise to do so.	1    2    3    4    5
9. Launderettes should keep all their records accurately.	1    2    3    4    5
10. Employees in the launderette should make information (such as opening times, services available, price lists) easy to access by the customers.	1    2    3    4    5
11. Employees in the launderette should give prompt service to customers.	1    2    3    4    5

12. Employees in a launderette always have to be willing to help customers.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Employees in the launderette should never be too busy to respond to customer requests promptly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Customers should be able to trust the employees of the launderette.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Customers should be able to feel safe in their transactions with launderettes employees	1	2	3	4	5
16. Employees in the launderette should be polite.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Employees in the launderette should get adequate support to do their jobs well.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Launderettes should be willing to meet the individual needs of customers.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Employees in the launderette are expected to give customers personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Employees in the launderette should know what the requirements of their customers are.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Launderettes are expected to have their customers' best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Launderettes should be expected to have operating hours convenient to all their customers.	1	2	3	4	5
23. launderettes should have a diversity of products and services.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Products offered in the launderette should be of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5

**3. EXPERIENCE:** The following set of statements relate to your **PERCEPTIONS** or feelings about the launderette service experienced in this building. For each statement, please show the extent to which you believe the launderette of this building has the feature described by the statement. Once again, if you strongly agree that these firms should possess a feature, circle number 5. If you agree, circle number 4. If you neither agree nor disagree circle 3. If you disagree circle number 2, and if you strongly disagree, circle 1. There are no right or wrong answers; all I am interested in is a number that best shows your **PERCEPTIONS** about the launderette service in this building.

STATEMENT	SCORES				
1. The launderette in this building has up to date equipments.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The physical facilities of the launderette are visually appealing	1	2	3	4	5
3. The employees of the launderette are well dressed and appear neat.	1	2	3	4	5

4. The appearance of the physical environment of the launderette is clean.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When the launderette promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When you have problems, the launderette is sympathetic and reassuring.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The launderette is dependable (services quality/standards are consistent).	1	2	3	4	5
8. The launderette provides its services at the time it promises to do so.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The launderette keeps all their records accurately.	1	2	3	4	5
10. The launderettes' employees make information (such as opening times, services, price lists) easy to access by the customers.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The launderettes' employees give prompt service to customers.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Employees of the launderette are always willing to help customers	1	2	3	4	5
13. Employees of the launderette are never too busy to respond to customer requests promptly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. You can trust employees of the launderette.	1	2	3	4	5
15. You feel safe in your transactions with the launderette employees.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Employees of the launderette are polite.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Employees get adequate support from the launderette company to do their jobs well.	1	2	3	4	5
18. The launderette gives you individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Employees of the launderette gives you personal attention.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Employees of the launderette know what your needs are.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The launderette has your best interests at heart.	1	2	3	4	5
22. The launderette has operating hours convenient to all their customers.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The launderette has a diversity of products and services	1	2	3	4	5
24. Products offered by the launderette are of good quality.	1	2	3	4	5



04/2015

Dear Participant,

I am a Master Business Administration student at Dublin Business School; I am currently working on my dissertation to accomplish my degree. The aim of this research is to investigate the factors that might have an impact on your satisfaction regarding the services provided by the Ranelagh launderette. I kindly ask you for your support by answering this questionnaire and giving me feedback about your experience with the launderette services. I would really appreciate if you would take part in this research, your experience with the launderette would give me an important input to my learning and a great contribution for the research.

Please, be assured that your response and all the information collected through this Questionnaire will be treated anonymously.

Thank you very much for your time and support.

Master Business Administration

Dublin Business School

L.N. Marisol Manzo Moreno

## RANELAGH LAUNDERETTE

The Ranelagh launderette is a full-laundry service, that also offers drycleaning, and internet service to its customer. Founded in

Is currently under the management of Marvelbrook Ltd.in 95 Ranelagh, Dublin 6 , Dublin Ireland.

### Vision and philosophy

It is our philosophy here at Launderette Ranelagh that customer satisfaction is the key to a successful business and we put our customers on top of everything else by providing the best laundry and dry cleaning services and meet the needs of our customers; Be the industry leader through our consistent pursuit of excellence. Remain trusted for our integrity, respected for our business practices and recognized for our success.

### **CORE VALUES** are :

#### **Quality :**

Delivering the best possible quality to our customers and ensuring they are satisfied with our services.

#### **Customer Service :**

We promise to provide our customers with the best customer care by listening and responding to our customer's needs. We promise to continue extending a warm friendly enthusiastic and courteous attitude towards our customers.

PERCEPTIONS									
QUESTION	TOTAL	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL		
Q1	50	22%	56%	18%	4%	0%	100%	OBJ 1	
Q2	50	24%	42%	30%	4%	0%	100%		
Q3	50	62%	26%	12%	0%	0%	100%		
Q4	50	46%	50%	2%	2%	0%	100%		
Q5	50	66%	24%	10%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 2	
Q6	50	66%	30%	2%	0%	2%	100%		
Q7	50	60%	36%	2%	2%	0%	100%		
Q8	50	62%	36%	2%	0%	0%	100%		
Q9	50	56%	38%	4%	0%	2%	100%		
Q10	50	38%	26%	10%	6%	20%	100%	OBJ 3	
Q11	50	64%	28%	6%	2%	0%	100%		
Q12	50	68%	30%	2%	0%	0%	100%		
Q13	50	54%	38%	6%	2%	0%	100%		
Q14	50	74%	20%	6%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 4	
Q15	50	76%	24%	0%	0%	0%	100%		
Q16	50	78%	20%	2%	0%	0%	100%		
Q17	50	42%	32%	22%	2%	2%	100%		
Q18	50	46%	26%	28%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 5	
Q19	50	48%	28%	20%	4%	0%	100%		
Q20	50	58%	16%	22%	4%	0%	100%		
Q21	50	48%	38%	14%	0%	0%	100%		
Q22	50	68%	28%	4%	0%	0%	100%		
Q23	50	40%	32%	28%	0%	0%	100%		
Q24	50	46%	36%	16%	2%	0%	100%		

EXPECTATIONS		TOTAL	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL	
QUESTION	TOTAL	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	TOTAL		
Q1	50	62%	30%	8%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 1	
Q2	50	40%	46%	10%	4%	0%	100%		
Q3	50	38%	46%	12%	4%	0%	100%		
Q4	50	72%	20%	6%	2%	0%	100%		
Q5	50	80%	18%	2%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 2	
Q6	50	60%	36%	4%	0%	0%	100%		
Q7	50	70%	26%	4%	0%	0%	100%		
Q8	50	68%	28%	2%	2%	0%	100%		
Q9	50	58%	24%	18%	0%	0%	100%		
Q10	50	58%	34%	8%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 3	
Q11	50	60%	38%	2%	0%	0%	100%		
Q12	50	58%	42%	0%	0%	0%	100%		
Q13	50	24%	40%	30%	6%	0%	100%		
Q14	50	70%	22%	6%	2%	0%	100%	OBJ 4	
Q15	50	74%	18%	8%	0%	0%	100%		
Q16	50	64%	30%	6%	0%	0%	100%		
Q17	50	68%	18%	14%	0%	0%	100%		
Q18	50	30%	52%	18%	0%	0%	100%	OBJ 5	
Q19	50	26%	50%	14%	6%	4%	100%		
Q20	50	34%	28%	24%	14%	0%	100%		
Q21	50	34%	54%	10%	2%	0%	100%		
Q22	50	40%	36%	22%	2%	0%	100%		
Q23	50	28%	32%	28%	12%	0%	100%		
Q24	50	60%	30%	10%	0%	0%	100%		

