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An Assessment of the Public Service Quality from the Citizen Perspective – Case of the Municipal Institutions in Constantine

**تقييم جودة الخدمات العمومية من وجهة نظر المواطن - دراسة
حالت القطاعات الحضريّة لبلديّة قسنطينة**

Dr. Korichi Mohamed Salah

mohamed.korichi@univ-constantine2.dz

University of Constantine2

Dr. Aggoun charaf

aggoun.charaf@yahoo.fr

university center of Mila

Dr. Korichi Hadjer

hj.korichi@yahoo.com

University of Constantine2

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Abstract :

The purpose of this paper is to assess the quality level of the services provided by the municipalities in Constantine. The researchers have used the Servperf scale that it consisted of five dimensions (reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangible). The sample selection of the population contains 580 people. Statistically speaking; a questionnaire is the main tool for data collection which were processed using the statistical analysis program SPSS. The study findings have revealed that the quality of public service provided by the municipalities in Constantine is not satisfactory enough regarding citizens' opinion, and it does not meet their expectations. Therefore, it



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

can be recommended that there is a need to enhance the quality level of the services provided by these municipalities, in order to gain more confidences and satisfactions of their citizens

Key words: the quality of public service; municipalities; servperf scale.

الملخص:

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تقييم مستوى جودة الخدمات المقدمة من طرف بلديات ولاية قسنطينة، تم الاعتماد في هذا على مقياس الأداء الفعلي Servperf والذي يتكون من خمسة أبعاد هي (الاعتمادية، الاستجابة، الضمان، التعاطف، والملموسية). منهجيا؛ تمثلت عينة الدراسة في 580 مستفيد من الخدمة العمومية تم اختيارهم بصفة عشوائية، هذا وقد تمت الاستعانة بالاستبيان كأداة رئيسة لجمع البيانات والتي تمت معالجتها باستخدام برنامج التحليل الإحصائي spss. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن جودة الخدمة العمومية التي تقدمها البلديات في ولاية قسنطينة ليست مرضية بما فيه الكفاية ولا تلي توقعات المواطنين. مما يتطلب في المقابل العمل على ترقيتها وتطويرها من أجل كسب ثقة ورضا المستفيدين منها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جودة الخدمة العمومية، القطاع الحضري، مقياس الأداء

الفعلي servperf

1. Introduction:

The role of public sector institutions in a community is to provide its people with satisfying services that are multiple; in a way that private sector cannot fulfill such needs conveniently to them. Hence, the municipalities in Algeria are considered one of the most important components of the public service sector at



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

national level, and the main supplier for the majority of services provided to citizens. Given the fact that citizens are the main beneficiaries of the services provided by these institutions, it becomes a necessity to achieve their satisfaction, by improving and developing the quality of public services.

The purpose of this study is to assess the current situation in terms of quality of public services provided by Algerian municipalities to citizen, by using factors expressed in terms of SERVPERF scale.

1.1 Study problematic:

It is of crucial to determine the level of public service quality in the municipalities from their customers' perspective, in order to know the current strengths and weaknesses of the services provided, and hence to identify deficiencies related to the asked needs. it's the main guarantee to promote their standard, and gain satisfaction and confidence of their customers. So the question that arises here is:

How could the Algerian citizens assess the level of public service quality provided by municipal institutions in Constantine ?

To answer this question, it might need more questions to be asked as follows:

-How citizens evaluate the public service quality in terms of reliability indicator?

-How citizens evaluate the public service quality in terms of responsiveness indicator?

-How citizens evaluate the public service quality in terms of assurance indicator?



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

-How citizens evaluate the public service quality in terms of empathy indicator?

-How citizens evaluate the public service quality in terms of tangible indicators?

1.2 Hypothesis:

- the citizens' evaluation of public service quality indicators is negative.

1.3 Study Objectives:

-Determining the level of public service quality in Algerian municipalities;

-Measuring the citizens' degree of satisfaction regarding the dimensions of public service quality;

-Identifying weaknesses in the dimensions of the quality of public services provided by the municipal institutions, and make recommendations for improvement.

1.4 Study Significance:

This study essentially aims at investigating the reality of services provided by the municipalities in Constantine, and the extent of citizens' satisfaction with them. Moreover, it will enable to pave the way for the municipalities' decision-makers to identify the weaknesses in the service quality, and therefore try to address them and take the necessary measures needed for the improvement of the services provided in future.

1.5 Research Methodology:

To attain reliable results, a descriptive approach and a analytical one were used, in addition to a survey research through a questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. A sample of 580 people randomly drawn in each municipality of



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Constantine city. The SPSS program was used to analyse data and perform statistical tests.

1.6 Previous Studies :

- (A. G. A. Ilhaamie, Member, IAENG ,2010) : « *Service Quality in Malaysian Public Service: Some Findings* »

This study tries to identify the most important dimension and to examine the level of service quality, expectation and perception of the external customers towards the Malaysian public services. Ten SERVQUAL instrument was distributed to each 300 public organizations throughout Malaysia. From 992 copies of usable questionnaire, the overall service quality is quite good. It is found that tangible is the most important dimension. It also has the lowest scores of perception. On the other hand, service quality gap is neither the lowest nor the highest. Finally, these external customers have the highest expectation on the reliability of the Malaysian public service.

- (Safiek Mokhlis, Yaleakho Aleesa, Ibrahim Mamat ,2011): « *Municipal Service Quality and Citizen Satisfaction in Southern Thailand* »

The objectives of the research are two-folds: (1) to examine the quality of municipal services provided by local government in southern Thailand; and (2) to identify the most important service quality dimensions that determine citizen satisfaction. The questionnaires were distributed to 234 respondents in Tambon Khok Pho, a subdistrict of Khok Pho in Pattani Province of southern Thailand. Results indicate that (1) the five dimensions of SERVQUAL represent a valid instrument to measure municipal service quality in Thai setting; and (2) four service quality dimensions, namely tangibility, empathy,



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

assurance and responsiveness significantly predicted citizen satisfaction, with an adjusted R² of 0.5. The findings can be used as a guide for municipal officials to improve the crucial quality attributes and enhance citizen satisfaction.

- (*Amanfi jnr, Benjamin, 2012*): «*Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Public Sector Organizations: A Case Study of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice*»

This study was undertaken to explore the relationship between service quality and client satisfaction in the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ). The study assessed the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and how the dimensions of service quality impacts on customer satisfaction, with the ultimate aim of finding out how changes in the former can be made to trigger positive changes in the latter. The study also assessed the standard of service quality in CHRAJ. The SERVQUAL instrument was modified and incorporated into a detailed questionnaire to solicit information from clients. The results indicated that there is a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction and that improvement in service quality can lead to the achievement of higher customer satisfaction.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

2. Literature Review:

2.1 Service Quality:

Nowadays, with the increased competition, service quality has become a popular area of academic research and has been acknowledged as an observant competitive advantage and supporting satisfying relationships with customers.¹

This concept has attracted considerable interest and debate in the marketing literature because of the difficulties in both defining it and measuring it with no overall consensus emerging on either.² it has been identified and documented as one of the key driving forces for organizational survival, sustainability and is crucial for the firm's accomplishment.

Service quality has been defined and conceptualized differently by different experts, researchers and practitioners. According to *Zeithaml & Bitner* "Service quality is a focused evaluation that reflects the customer's perceptions of specific dimensions of quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible".³ It is a conceptual construct which centres on perceived quality defined as a customer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority.

¹- Niveen El Saghier, Demyana Nathan, **Service Quality Dimensions and Customers' Satisfactions of Banks in Egypt**, Proceedings of 20th International Business Research Conference, Dubai, UAE, 4 - 5 April 2013, p:2.

²- Safiek Mokhlis & Yaleakho Aleesa, **Municipal Service Quality and Citizen Satisfaction in Southern Thailand**, Journal of Public Administration and Governance, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2011, p124.

³- Zeithaml, V. A., & dan Gremler, B. Service **Marketing – Integrating Customer Focus across the Firm**. New York: Mc. Graw Hill., 2009, p85.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

According to *Parasuraman & al* service quality is “the difference between customers expectations of services and their perceived service”.¹ If the expectation is greater than the service performance, perceived quality is less than satisfactory and general dissatisfaction occurs.

In other words, service quality is the result of the comparison that customers make between their expectations about a service and their perception of the ways the service has been performed.² *Parasuraman & al*, also add that service quality is the ability of the organization to meet or exceed customer expectation.

2.2 Public Service Quality

The public service is an activity or series of activities, which is conducted to meet a service needs; it is administrated by the laws for every citizen and resident for the goods, services, and or administrative services provided by public service providers.

The core of public service is the attitude of being helpful, friendly and professional in providing services or products from a certain agency that satisfy the society. Public service demands of each element in the agency to empathies with the public. It implies a certain meaning; as “the ability of

¹- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, L.L, **A conceptual Model of Service Quality and its implications for Future Research**, Journal of Marketing, Vol 49,1985, p 42.

²- Amanfi Jnr., Benjamin, **Service Quality and Custmer Satisfactionin Public Sector Organizations: a Case Study Ofthe Commisionon Human Rightsand Administrative Justice**, A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Distance Learning, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Commonwealth Executive Mastersin Business Administration, JULY, 2012, p25.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

government bureaucrats to put themselves on the community and comprehend the things or issues from a community perspective". Also public service is "the provision of the services performed by the government as state officials to meet the needs of the community (the public) in accordance with relevant regulations".¹

Javier regarded that government service quality improvement must be evaluated in view of customer, enlarge the scope, not only some units, departments, but learn success experience of private sector, and transfer to public sector application.² Besides, in related evaluation, the role of people in quality evaluation must be verified; internal evaluation shall consider active participation of organization institution top managers and members. People satisfaction related information shall be surveyed by external agency, comparing difference of similar groups or different groups. Evaluation result shall be publicized after a time to keep time effect so as to be benchmark that public sectors can discuss improvement. It's known from above that, service could change service means and content by means of contacting customers and knowing their demand, so that customers get maximal satisfaction. Hence, future service quality shall be definitely the key to

¹- Ernani Hadiyati1, **Service Quality and Performance of Public Sector: Study on Immigration Office in Indonesia**, International Journal of Marketing Studies; Vol. 6, No. 6; 2014, pp 107.

²- Chih-Tung Hsiao & Jie-Shin Lin, **A Study of Service Quality in Public Sector**, International Journal of Electronic Business Management, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008, p31.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

improving administration performance and competency for public sector.

2.3 Service Quality Dimensions

Various authors have provided different conceptualizations over time about dimensions of service quality. They include *Gronroos's* three-component structure (technical quality, functional quality and reputational quality); *Lehtinen's* three component conceptualization (interactive, physical and corporate quality); *Hedvall & Paltschik's* two dimensions model (willingness and ability to serve, physical and psychological access); *Garvin's* nine dimensional approach (performance, features, conformance, reliability, durability, serviceability, response, aesthetics and reputation); *Oliver & Rust's* (functional quality, technical quality, environmental quality construct); *Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (PZB)* conceptualization of five dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) which eventually led to the development of the Servqual instrument.¹

However, the five dimensional construct of (PZB) happens to be the most universally accepted and most extensively used.

Assurance: It has been defined as the employees' knowledge and courtesy and the service provider's ability to inspire trust and confidence.

¹- Parasuraman, A., Berry, I. and Zeithaml, V. **SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perception of service quality**, Journal of Retailing, 1988, p:17.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Empathy: It means treating the customer as if he is unique and special. It is defined as the caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

Reliability: It is about the organization keeping its word. It is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, or delivering on its promises.

Responsiveness: It is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt services. This dimension is concerned with dealing with customer's requests, questions and complaints promptly and attentively.

Tangibles: It means the physical appearance of facilities, equipment, staff and written materials. Tangibles are used to convey images and to signal quality.

2.4 Measurement Service Quality

Sachdev & Verma, had stated that service quality by its very nature is an elusive, indistinct and abstract concept. Consumers do not easily articulate their requirement and also there are difficulties in delimiting and measuring the concept. As a result only a handful of researchers have operationalized the concept.

In the literature two perspectives of service quality measurement have been identified, internal and external perspectives. The external perspective sees service quality in terms of customer perception, customer expectation, customer satisfaction, customer attitude and customer delight .¹

¹-Harsh verma & sheetal, **Relative importance of service quality dimensions: a multisectoral study**, journal of service research , V4,N1, 20014,p: 97.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Among the different definitions of service quality that measure the external perspective, the one given by (PZB) seems particularly useful. It has been widely adopted by researchers examining service quality issues. They (PZB) define service quality as the degree and direction of discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations in terms of different but relatively important dimensions of service quality, which can affect their future behavior. Its measurement has been described, as it exists along a continuum ranging from ideal quality to totally unacceptable quality with some point along the continuum representing satisfactory quality. According to them, the position of a customer's perception of service quality on the continuum depends on the nature of the discrepancy between the expected service and service perceived by the client.¹

When the expected is more than the actual, service quality is less than satisfactory. It will move towards totally unacceptable quality as the negative discrepancy between expected and perceived services increases. When expected is less than perceived, perceived service quality is more than satisfactory and will tend towards ideal quality with increased positive discrepancy between expected and perceived service. In the situation where expected is equal to perceived, service quality is satisfactory.

*** The SERVQUAL Model**

The SERVQUAL model proposes that customers evaluate the quality of a service on five distinct dimensions: reliability,

¹- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V.A. and Berry, Op Cit, pp 41 -50.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The SERVQUAL instrument consists of 22 statements for assessing consumer perceptions and expectations regarding the quality of a service. Perceived service quality results from comparisons by consumers of expectations with their perceptions of service delivered by the service providers. It can be argued that the factor underpinning the delivering of good perceived service quality is actually meeting the expectations of the customers. Thus, excellent service quality is exceeding the customers' expectations.

Parasuraman & al. suggested that customer expectations are what the customers think a service should offer rather than what might be on offer. *Zeithaml & al.* identified four factors that influence customers' expectations: word-of-mouth communications; personal needs; past experience; and external communications.

*** Criticisms of SERVQUAL**

The SERVQUAL instrument for measuring service quality has been subjected to a number of criticisms. Most research studies do not support the five-factor structure of SERVQUAL put forward by *Parasuraman & al.*, and administering expectation items is also considered unnecessary.¹ In addition, *Cronin & Taylor* have developed their own performance-based measure, the SERVPERF. In fact, the SERVPERF scale is the unweighted perceptions components of SERVQUAL, which

¹- Prabha Ramseok-Munhurrun & Soolakshna D, **Service Quality in The Public Service,** international journal of management and marketing research, Volume 3 , Number 1 , 2010, p 40.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

consists of 22 perception items thus excluding any consideration of expectations. In their empirical work in four industries, *Cronin & Taylor* found that unweighted SERVPERF measure (performance-only) performs better than any other measure of service quality, and that it has the ability to provide more accurate service quality score than SERVQUAL. They argue that current performance best reflects a customer's perception of service quality, and that expectations are not part of this concept.

3. Methodology

3.1 sample Study

The study sample was selected from citizens who visit the municipal institutions in Constantine to get services. Twelve general municipalities were considered for investigation and the sample was divided among the 12 municipalities based on proportionality to the size. Because of the large population, the sample was selected randomly in each municipality. Questionnaires were distributed to citizens in service provided locations. 600 Questionnaires were handed over, of which 20 were excluded, so the total number of questionnaires valid for analysis was 580, representing (96.6%).

3.2 Study Collecting Tool

To achieve the objectives of the study, we relied on data gathered from primary and secondary sources:

a-Secondary data: has been collected from literature, research and thesis.

b- Primary data: has been collected through field study using questionnaires designed to achieve the objectives of the study. These questionnaires consist of two parts. Part(I):



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

included demographics (gender, age, education level). Part(II): included seventeen statements representing the five major dimensions of public service quality (Assurance, Empathy, Reliability, Responsiveness, Tangibles).

3.3 Measurement of Variables/Indicators

The measurement of each variable is based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 = strongly agree (very positive), 4 = agree (positive), 3 = neutral (usual), 2 = disagree (negative), to 1 =strongly disagree (very negative). To be able to categorize the average value of the variables of service quality, the Likert scale can be made in the form of class intervals, ranging from 4.2-5 = strongly agree (very positive), 3.4-4.2 = agree (positive), 2.6-3.4 = neutral (usual), 1.8-2.6 = disagree (negative), to 1-1.8 = strongly disagree (very negative).

3.4 Analytical procedure

Data from 580 valid questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe respondents' demographics and to evaluate the quality of services provided by the municipalities. The statistical methods used in this study include: *Means, Standard Deviations and Cronbach Alpha*.

3.5 Reliability Test

Reliability test is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used measurement tool with a generally agreed lower limit of 0.6. Table (1) below indicates Cronbach's alpha test results:



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Table (1): Cronbach Alpha Test Results

Dimension	Value of Alpha	Level scale
Assurance	0647.	Average
Empathy	0824.	Excellent
Reliability	0844.	Excellent
Responsiveness	0713.	Good
Tangibles	0687.	Average
Service Quality	0770.	Good

***source:** researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

The results in the table above indicate the following:

- The value of alpha for the reliability dimension = 0.844
- The value of alpha for the empathy dimension = 0.824
- The value of alpha for the responsiveness dimension =

0.713

- The value of alpha for the tangibles dimension = 0.687
- The value of alpha for the assurance dimension = 0.647
- The value of alpha for the dimensions (service quality) =

0.770

As can be seen from this table, all the alpha coefficients were above the required level of 0.6, which indicates the stability in the instrument of the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Description of Demographics and Personal Factors of the Respondents:

Table below presents the frequency distribution of the respondents' demographic profile in terms of gender, age and education level.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Table (2): Socio-demographic data of the sample

Variables		<i>Frequencies</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	379	65.3
	Female	201	34.6
Age	< 30 years	245	42.2
	30-39 years	155	26.7
	40-49 years	125	21.5
	≥ 50 years	55	9.4
Education level	Illiterate	3	0.5
	Primary and secondary school	380	65.5
	Academic Degree	197	34

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

The sample consisted of 580 respondents, of whom most were males (65.3%) and (34.6%) females, with the largest age group under 30 years old (42.2 %), followed by those aged between 30-39 years (26.7%), (21.5 %) were 40-49 years, and (9.4%) of the respondents were 50 years old or over. Regarding the level of education, most of the respondents have primary and secondary level (65.5%), (34%) of them have an academic degree, only (0.5%) of the respondents are illiterate.

4.2 Evaluation of public service quality in Constantine municipalities

4.2.1 The evaluation of public service quality in terms of reliability indicator:

Table (3): means, standard deviations of the reliability indicator



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

NO	Items	Mean Values	Standard Deviation	Degree of agreement
1	The municipality employees are committed to provide services on time	2.96	1.189	Average
2	Service is provided without errors	2.72	1.222	Average
3	Service providers have full knowledge and are highly skilled in providing services.	2.54	1.134	Low
	All the items	2.74	0.967	Average

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, the degree of agreement with the items regarding reliability indicator ranged between average and low (mean values between 2.54 -2.96). The degree of agreement with the first and second items was average, the item *"The municipality employees are committed to provide services on time"* came first, with a mean score of 2.96 which means that there is no permanent commitment by the municipalities to provide services on time. This is followed by the item *"Service is provided without errors"* with a mean score of 2.72, this means that municipal services are not always effective and reliable, which is reflected by the frequent citizens' complaints about the errors contained in the civil status records. On the other hand, we observe a low degree of



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

agreement with the third item “*Service providers have full knowledge and are highly skilled in providing services*” with a mean score of 2.54, which indicate that some of the service providers in the municipalities do not have the necessary experience and skills required to perform services in an effective and reliable manner, and this due to the absence of training programs in the municipalities.

Overall, the total mean score of reliability indicator was 2.74, this indicates an overall state of dissatisfaction among the beneficiaries with the quality of public service in terms of reliability indicator.

4.2.2 The evaluation of public service quality in terms of responsiveness indicator

Table (4): means, standard deviations of the responsiveness indicator

NO	Items	Mean values	Standard Deviation	Degree of agreement
1	Rapidity in providing services to citizens (compared with the previous periods)	3.43	1.059	High
2	The rectification of civil status documents and certificates does not take much time	2.31	1.024	Low
3	Quick response to citizens' inquiries	2.31	0.951	Low



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

	and complaints			
	all the items	2.68	0.689	Average

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, the degree of agreement with the items regarding responsiveness indicator ranged between high and low (mean values between 2.31 -3.43). The degree of agreement with the first item "*rapidity in providing services to citizens (compared with the previous periods)*" was high, with a mean score of 3.43, which can be explained by an improvement made in the recent years in public services in terms of rapidity responsiveness, and this is through the introduction of modern technologies and the digitization of civil status registers enabled to provide services more rapidly. On the other hand, we observe a low degree of agreement with the second and third items: "*The rectification of civil status documents and certificates does not take much time*" and "*Quick response to citizens' inquiries and complaints*" with a mean score of 2.31. This means that in spite of the use of automated media and new technologies, there are still delays in correcting administrative errors, and respond to citizens' inquires and complaints.

Overall, the total mean score of responsiveness indicator was 2.68, this indicates that the quality of public service with regard to the responsiveness indicator falls short of expectations, and hence, the municipalities need to address this issue.

4.2.3 The evaluation of public service quality in terms of assurance indicator:



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

**Table(5): means, standard deviations of the assurance
indicator**

NO	Items	Mean values	Standard Deviation	Degree of agreement
1	The municipality is committed to provide the services as expected by citizens	2.70	1.023	Average
2	Providing reliable information	2.97	1.012	Average
3	The citizens feel reassured dealing with service providers	2.83	0.875	Average
	all the items	2.83	0.901	Average

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, the degree of agreement with the items regarding assurance indicator was average (means score ranged from 2.70-2.97), meaning that they all fall within the 'neutral' area on the Likert scale. In this context, the item "Providing reliable information" came first, with a mean score of 2.97, this means that the citizens raise questions about the reliability of the information provided to them. This is followed by the item "The citizens feel reassured dealing with service providers" with a mean score of 2.83, this shows that citizens do not feel secure when dealing with service providers, and this is due to the lack of citizens' confidence in the capabilities and skills of the employees. The item "The municipality is committed



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

to provide the services as expected by citizens” came last with a mean score of 2.70, Meaning that the services provided to the citizens do not always meet their expectations.

Overall, The total mean score of this indicator was 2.83, which suggests that the assurance indicator does not fall within the level of performance expected from public service.

4.2.4 The evaluation of public service quality in terms of empathy indicator:

Table (6): means, standard deviations of the empathy indicator

NO	Items	Mean values	Standard Deviation	Degree of agreement
1	Listening attentively to the citizens	3.00	1.065	Average
2	Welcoming of citizens by service providers	2.98	0.991	Average
3	Employees always willing to help	3.36	0.976	Average
	all the items	3.11	0.870	Average

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, items regarding the empathy indicator received an average degree of agreement, the means score ranged from 2.98 (for: Welcoming of citizens by service providers) to 3.36 (for: Employees always willing to help), meaning that they all fall within the ‘neutral’ area on the Likert scale. The results generally indicate that citizens are not entirely satisfied with the dealing method and reception by service providers.



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Overall, The total mean score of empathy indicator was 3.11, which suggests that the empathy indicator does not fall within the level of performance expected from public service.

4.2.5 The evaluation of public service quality in terms of tangible indicator:

Table(7): means, standard deviations of the tangible indicator

NO	Items	Mean values	Standard Deviation	Degree of agreement
1	The waiting lounges are comfortable spacious, clean and air-conditioned.	3.86	1.132	High
2	The service providers take care of their external appearance	3.40	0.833	High
3	The municipalities use advanced equipment and techniques.	3.70	0.946	High
	all the items	3.65	0.675	High

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, the degree of agreement with the items regarding tangible indicator was high. The means score of all items is above 3.40, meaning that they all fall within the 'agree' area on the Likert scale. In this context, the item "*The waiting lounges are comfortable spacious, clean and air-conditioned*" came first, with a mean score of 3.86, and confirming the efforts of Constantine municipalities heads to implement the strategic plan to reform and modernize the



**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

municipalities headquarters and improve the reception areas for citizens seeking services. This is followed by the item "*The municipalities use advanced equipment and techniques*" with a mean score of 3.70, reflecting the fact that Constantine municipalities have benefited, in recent years, from modern technologies in the form of advanced hardware and software, in addition to the World Wide Web with the Internet and Intranet. Consequently, these institutions started mainly relying on modern technologies in providing services to the public, recognizing the important role played by these technologies in improving the performance of service providers and thus, the quality of services provided. The item "*The service providers take care of their external appearance*" came last with a mean score of 3.40, suggesting that the service providers in the municipalities are seeking to convey a decent image to the citizens, which, in their opinion, would give a good impression of the quality of the service provided.

Overall, the total mean score of tangible indicator was 3.65, which means that the service beneficiaries were overwhelmingly satisfied with the tangible aspect of the public service.

4.2.6 Overall assessment of the public service quality in Constantine municipalities

The table (8) below summarizes the overall mean of indicators of public service quality.

Table (8): Overall assessment of the quality of public service

<i>Service Quality Indicators</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Degree of assessment</i>	<i>Order of indicators</i>
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**An Assessment of the Public Service ----- Korichi Hadjer
and Korichi Mohamed Salah and Aggoun charaf**

Reliability	2.74	Average	5
Responsiveness	2.86	Average	3
Assurance	2.83	Average	4
Empathy	3.11	Average	2
Tangibles	3.65	High	1
The overall mean	3.03	Average	

source: researcher based on SPSS program outcomes

Based on the table findings, the mean values of service quality indicators ranged from 2.83-3.65, the total mean score was 3.03. These results suggest that the citizens' evaluation of public service quality was overall negative, meaning that the citizens are not totally satisfied with the level of services provided to them by the municipalities in Constantine.

5. Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to assessing the level of public service quality in the municipalities cited in Constantine. The findings have showed that the quality of public service in the municipalities was not satisfying regarding citizens' requirements, and does not meet their expectations. Therefore, the implications that can be deduced from this study suggest that the municipalities should devote considerable efforts toward the improvement of quality of their services, which would lead to gaining more confidences and satisfactions of their citizens.

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