

# **Service Quality Mediate the Relationship between Education Training Cognition and Customer Satisfaction**

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## **Abstract**

With the popularity of information and communication, drinking coffee has become a trend in Taiwan. With the booming coffee industry booming, many coffee chain operators are struggling to try to capture consumer preferences. Therefore, this study is to explore the relationship among education training cognition, service quality and customers satisfaction. A total of 310 valid questionnaires were collected from coffee chain restaurants in Tainan, Taiwan. The results indicate that employees' education training cognition has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, service quality plays a mediation role between the relationship of education training cognition and customer satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Education Training Cognition, Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction

## **1. Introduction**

Taiwan's economy was still under the development except for those with some higher social status before the 1970s. Most of the people were busy with their daily life, only a small part can hang around in the cafe. After the 1970s, Taiwan's economy continued to rise up. Today, coffee is no longer a

luxury food and can be enjoyed by the general public (Chien, 2003). With the increasing income of general public and the diversified consumption patterns, the development of chain stores have become the pursuit of various industries. If the feelings and atmosphere created by the store enable the consumers to be recognized, they will have a sustainable attraction to the people (Lee, 2003).

Chain stores are the most direct link to deliver goods or services to consumers. Hence, chain stores have become the main trend of the current business, especially the rising of inexpensive coffee. One of the coffee chain stores established in Tainan, in July 2004 is currently the most promising one in Taiwan. It set up a record of inexpensive coffee and became the icon of coffee industry. The reason for coffee chain stores grows rapidly in a short time. In addition to its high quality and low price, it can also understand that the consumer's demand for coffee, which has a trend of increasing year by year. Furthermore, the market share and return on investment are used strategically to reduce the costs and to increase the productivity (Horng, 2001). Leon and Leslie (2000) considered that consumers often meet individual needs through the related consumer activities. How to make customers feel satisfied, comfortable and increase their willingness to come again will be the major issue. The quality of service will affect the satisfaction of customers, and the effectiveness of employees' education and training will be helpful for the improvement of service quality (Cheng, Yu, Cheng and Lee, 2015; Hsu, Chang, Wu and Chen, 2017). For this purpose, this article will explore the consumer's perception of the relationship amid employees' education and training, service quality and customer satisfaction. As a reference for the future education and training, and improve the service quality to meet customer satisfaction and improve organizational performance.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Education Training Cognition**

The education focuses on "education", "training" and "development". "Education" is to cultivate individual capacity to develop potential which belongs to a longer-term, extensive, comprehensive and developmental learning work (Chang, 1999). "Training" is a strategic human resource management adopted by a team. The experience shared from senior staffs through the arrangement of some courses, or the guidance of specialized organizations to help new employees to quickly adapt to the new environment and enrich new skills (Chen, 2000). "Development" is to enhance the professional knowledge growth and professional learning experience to upgrade the work confidence of employees (Huang, 2008). It also meets the needs of individuals and organizations while education and training, (Li, 2000). This will effectively enhance to obtain personal knowledge and the improvement of personal productivity (Wang, 2001).

Swanson and Holton believed that education has five core standards: (1) Focus on the systematic training process. (2) Professional education and training personnel. (3) Interesting and effective teaching, especially in line with the characteristics of adult learners. (4) Transfer learning site to the workplace. (5) Effective application of information technology. Educational training plays the role of providing employees with knowledge enhancement, skills, ideas or attitude changes. Improve the work ability of employees timely, improve the performance of employees, and cultivate the talents needed by the organization. This will make more contributions to the organization.

### **2.2. Service Quality**

Service quality refers to the representative consumers who feel continuous and stable satisfaction with the business services. Service Quality is a method in order to achieve customer expectations, meanwhile, it is also a method used to assess the measurement that meets customer expectations. Service quality is to meet the needs and expectations of customers (Andrew, Clayton, and Charles, 2002). Present the difference between expectations and actual services (Wakefield, 2001). Service

process is the focus of service industry, and the quality of service is closely related to the service process. To do a good job in quality management means a good management in process (Yang, 2001).

Albrecht and Zemke (2002) considered that there are four characteristics of outstanding service: (1) Understanding the key moments of customers: The key moment is the moment when customers and business contact each other. For each time, it may form an impression of service quality, and whether it can win customer recognition lies in every critical moment. (2) Well-designed service strategy: It guides the staffs to focus on the things that the customers really care. (3) A system that considers customers: a method of allocating organizational resources based on service policies and service content. (4) Customer-oriented frontline personnel: Authorized to work for customers through knowledge, policy and culture. Brady, Robertson and Cronin (2001) argued that quality of service is an assessment of multiple levels of performance: (1) Environmental quality: Service is intangible. The organization must let the customer experience the process of service and make the service become an important principle. (2) Interactive quality: The service is intangible and inseparable, so the interaction between customers and service personnel becomes an important consideration for delivery services. (3) Quality of results: Evaluate the perceptions produced by customers after receiving services.

Tsai (2004) pointed out Service is very different from Quality, but the two concepts of quality are the same. The basic definition of quality is meet the standard, meet the specification and meet the demanding. Therefore, Etzel, Walker and Stanton (2001) proposed that good service quality is the most important key in service marketing. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) argued that the biggest difference between service and commodity is that service has four characteristics: intangibility, indivisibility, temperament and perishability. In 1988, Parasuraman et al. proposed the "SERVQUAL" scale including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles as a measurement of the service quality. Service quality is the subjective feeling that consumers perceive to the business products, or the services they received. In addition to the willingness to repurchase, it also increased the amount of repurchase and recommended behavior.

### **2.3. Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction refers to the formation of a consumer attitude. It is the overall assessment of the consumer after purchasing the product or receiving the service (Lu, 2006). Consumer's perceived perceptions and expectations of products after comparison (Kotler, 2003). Joewono and Kubota (2007) proposed that "satisfaction" was based on the consumer's past experience to conduct product and labor measurement, meanwhile to conduct a holistic assessment of consumer's experience. Satisfaction was a comparison before and after purchasing process, a comparison between the input cost and the benefits obtained, a comparison between the pre-purchase expectations and the post-purchase results. Yang (2001) proposed that the good or bad of products or services was the customer's satisfaction after purchasing, so price, quality and service were the reasons for affecting customer satisfaction.

Yeung, Lee and Ennew (2002) also believed that customer satisfaction can be regarded as a kind of evaluation of expectations. Under highly competitive environment, though many businesses gave consumers the best service quality and met their diverse needs, they still can't keep them. The main reason is to ignore the good relationships with consumers. Many diehard customers were built on the long-term benefits of a product or service (Jen and Hu, 2003). Business can observe in many different directions to satisfy customers. Customer satisfaction is the goal of business. It can even be used "how to satisfy customers" as a business guideline. Oliver (1981); Parasuraman et al. (1985) measured customer satisfaction by variables such as product value, employee service, and service environment.

According to Czepiel, Larry, Rosenberg, and Akerele (1974), customer satisfaction Customer satisfaction can be viewed as a combined experience or a summary evaluation of the entire product or service experience of company.

## 2.4. The Relationship among Education Training, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Lai and Chou (2010) believed that enterprises must do a good job in the education and training. It is necessary for the employees to conform to the professional standards from the mentality, talks and behaviors, and provide customers with all-round services to enable customers to achieve all-round satisfaction. In terms of service, the company must strengthen education and training, service and assessment and also integrate customer opinions. Introduce the right service concept, strengthen the service process, and interact skill with the customer and the response of the customer complaints. This is very important for the improvement of service quality. Therefore, employee's education and training is an important indicator for improving the efficiency of enterprises and helping to improve service quality. Here, present hypothesis 1 (as below). Lin (2007) pointed out that customer satisfaction is the past experience of customers and the overall evaluation of products and services. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) believed that product quality, service quality, price, situational factors and personal factors will indirectly affect the degree of customer satisfaction. Customer orientation has a positive impact on customer satisfaction, and customer-orientation business leads to higher service quality and customer satisfaction. Baker and Crompton (2000) also believed that the higher quality of service, the higher customer's return and willingness to repurchase. Here, present hypothesis 2(as below).

Chang (1999) pointed out that education and training can improve service quality and at the same time improve customer satisfaction. Fecikova (2004) believed that customer satisfaction can enable the business to clearly understand consumer trends and profits in the market. Therefore, it can be understood that customer satisfaction is very important to the business. Peng and Ye (2006) proposed that enterprise managers should have empathy and treat employees as "internal customers". Regarded the job of each department as the "internal product", and encourage employees to communicate and promote through education and training. It will indirectly affect the employee's work attitude and satisfaction, and upgrade the overall evaluation of customers after meeting their needs and expectations which enable enterprises to survive in the fierce market competition. Here, present hypothesis 3(as below). Customer satisfaction can be observed and thought from many different aspects. Customers are important, and customer satisfaction is the business goal. Taking customer opinions as the guideline is bound to be the direction of the business. Customer Satisfaction means customer-oriented approach. Under the interactive influence of service quality and education training on customer satisfaction, it was found that the quality of education and training significantly affected customer satisfaction. In summary, the relationship between consumers' awareness of business education and training and customer satisfaction will be affected by the intermediary effect of service quality. Here, present hypothesis 4(as below).

Here, presents all the hypotheses 1-4:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The influence of education training cognition on service quality is positive.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Service quality has a positive influence on customer satisfaction.

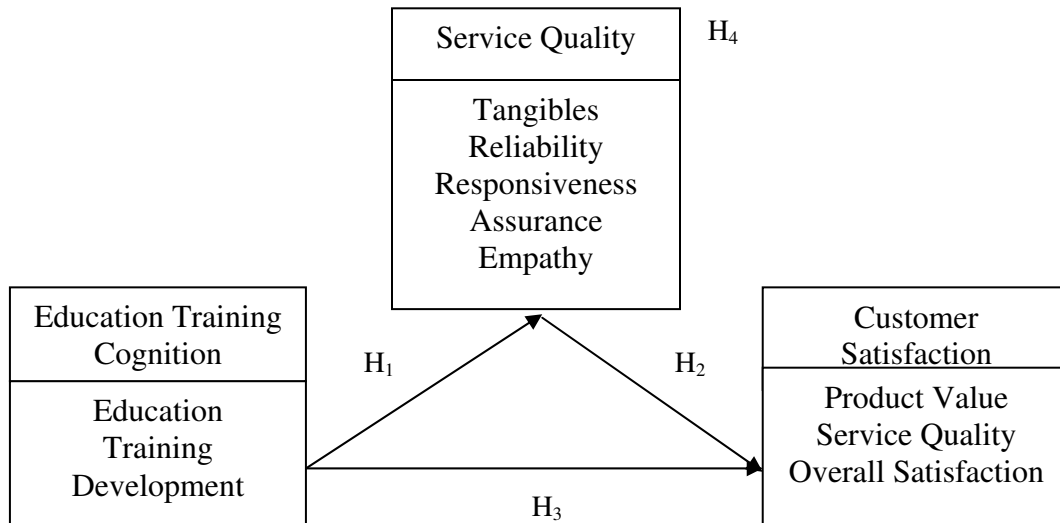
**H<sub>3</sub>:** The influence of education training cognition on customer satisfaction is positive.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Service Quality mediate the influence of education training cognition on customer satisfaction.

## 3. Research Method

### 3.1. Research Structure

After literature analysis, it was found that consumers have a correlation with employee's education training, service quality and customer satisfaction. The structure is presented, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Research Structure**

### 3.2. Research Tools

#### 3.2.1. Education Training Cognition

This section referred to the questionnaire of Hsieh (2009) of "A Study of the Relationship between Evaluation of Educational Training Effectiveness and Service Quality in the Food Chain Industry—Using Chinese Fast Food Stores as an Example" included three dimensions of education, training, and development, and 12 questions. Questionnaires were measured by the five-point scale of the Likert, with "very disagree" to "very agree", given 1 to 5 points respectively.

#### 3.2.2. Service Quality

The section was based on the proposed the "SERVQUAL" scale (Parasuraman et al., 1988) including five dimension of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, and was revised with the advice of experts and scholars, for a total of 13 questions. Questionnaires were measured by the five-point scale of the Likert, with "very disagree" to "very agree", given 1 to 5 points respectively.

#### 3.2.3. Customer Satisfaction

The questionnaire was amended according to Lin (2007) included three dimensions and 8 questions. Questionnaires were measured by the five-point scale of the Likert, with "very disagree" to "very agree", given 1 to 5 points respectively.

#### 3.2.4. Research Objects and Sampling Methods

This article was based on the customers of a chain restaurant in Tainan, Taiwan. The question is based on the five-point scale of the Likert scale. Questionnaires were measured by the five-point scale of the Likert scale. "Employee Education and Training" and "Quality of Service" put on the first and second parts of the questionnaire and invited the participants to answer all questions based on their actual experience measured from 1 point (very disagree) to 5 points (very agree). The questionnaire was answered anonymously included gender, age, occupation, frequency on monthly consumption and monthly consumption amount. Total 310 valid questionnaires were collected and sample data was performed by using SPSS 18.0 and AMOS 18.0 statistical analysis based on the assumptions of the aforementioned hypothesis.

## 4. Results Analysis and Discussion

### 4.1 The Sample Basic Data Analysis

Analysis of the questionnaires, male is 56% and 44% for female; mostly 21 to 30 years-old, accounting for 64.9%. Accounting for 60.4% received high education, and mostly single. In terms of consumption, the average monthly consumption is about 1~2 times, and the consumption amount is under NT\$100 inclusive.

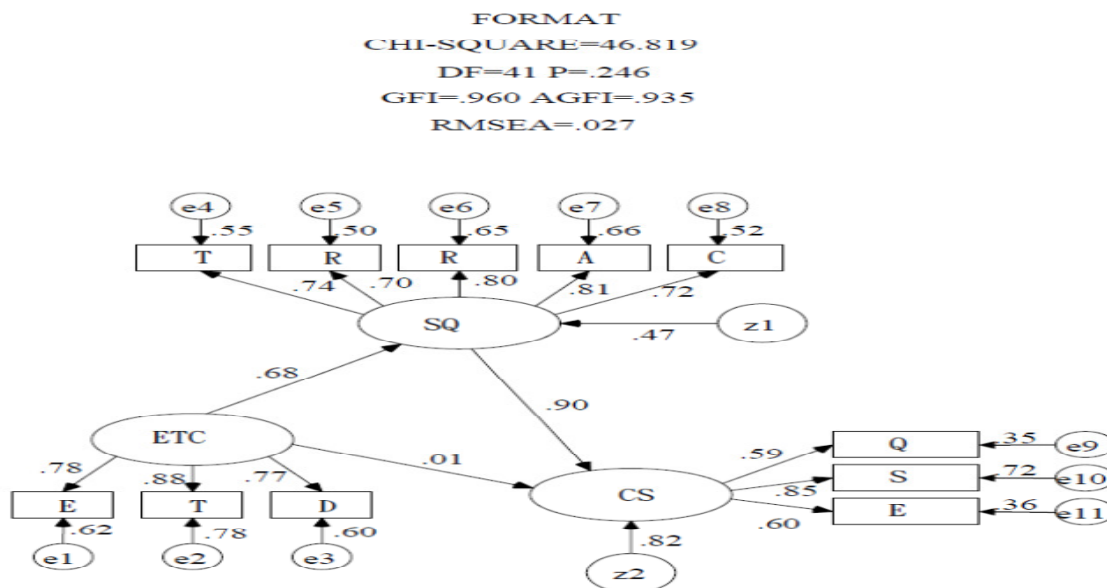
### 4.2 The Reliability and Validity of the Scale

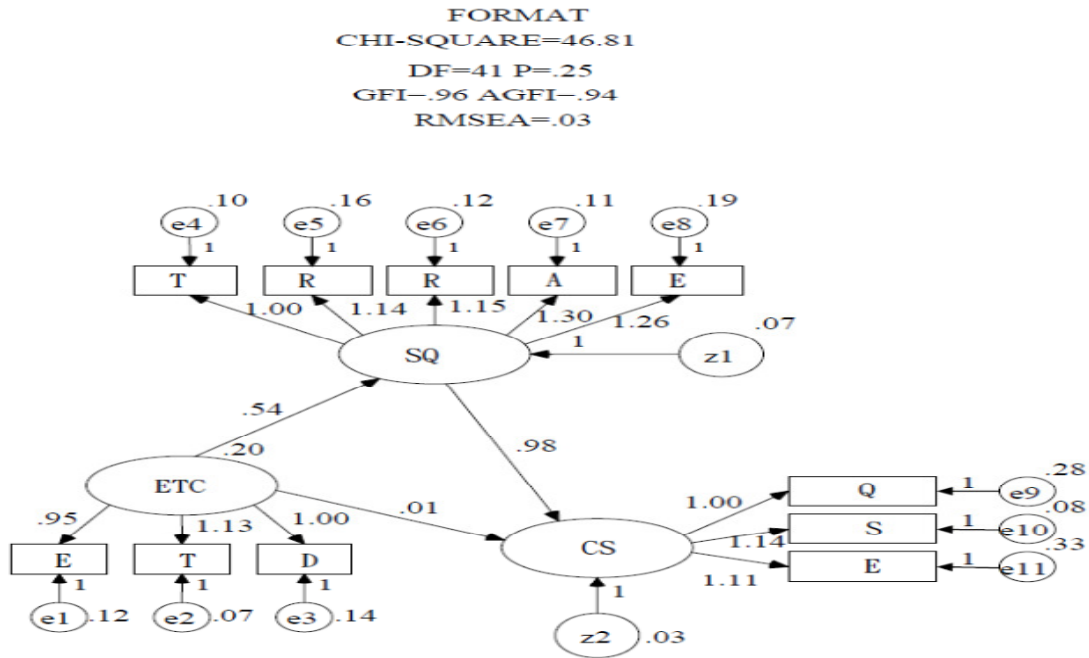
Regarding the educational training scale and service quality adopted in this article, all the structural reliability of each item is greater than 0.7 and the alpha reliability is greater than 0.9, the factor load value is greater than 0.7, and the t value are greater than 3. Obviously, this scale was displayed with considerable reliability and validity (Chen, 2005).

### 4.3 Structural Model Test

As shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, according to Chen (2005) proposed the model chi-square value was 46.8,  $DF=42$ ,  $CMIN/DF=1.14<2$ , Goodness of fit index (GFI) =  $0.92 > 0.9$ , AGFI =  $0.93 > 0.9$ , Comparative fit index (CFI) =  $0.99 > 0.9$ ,  $P=0.25 > 0.05$ , Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) =  $0.01 < 0.05$ . All through the verification of the model fitness index, it showed that this model has a fairly goodness of fit.

**Figure 2: Standardized Path Coefficient**



**Figure 3:** Unstandardized Path Coefficient

#### 4.4. The Influence of Consumers' Perception to Employee Education Cognition and Service Quality

As shown in Table 1, the influence of consumer perception to employee education and service quality, after regression analysis, resulted in a path coefficient of 0.53 and the t value of 7.71 ( $p < .05$ ). A statistically significant level has been achieved. The results showed that consumers' perceptions of employee education and training had a positive and significant impact on service quality. This article assumed that  $H_1$  was supported.

**Table 1:** The Regression analysis for the Relationship of Education Training Cognition and Service Quality

Variable	Beta	Error	t value	P value
Employee Education Cognition	0.53	0.07	72.34	0.000***

#### 4.5. The Influence of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction

As shown in Table 2, the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction, after regression analysis, obtained a path coefficient of 1.00, and the t value was 7.55 greater than 2 ( $p < .05$ ), reaching a statistically significant level. The results showed that service quality had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. This article assumed that  $H_1$  was supported.

**Table 2:** The Regression analysis for the Relationship of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Variable	Beta	Error	t value	P value
Service Quality	0.98	.1496	6.57	0.000***

#### 4.6. The Influence of Consumers' Awareness of Education and Training on Customer

##### Satisfaction

As shown in Table 3, The influence of consumers' awareness of education and training on customer satisfaction, after regression analysis, obtained a path coefficient of 0.54, and the t value of 5.83 greater than 2 ( $p < .05$ ), reaching a statistically significant level. The results showed that consumers' awareness of education and training had a positive and significant impact on customer satisfaction. This article assumed that  $H_3$  was supported.

**Table 3:** Regression Analysis Results for the Relationship of Education Training Cognition and Customer Satisfaction

Variable	Beta	Error	t value	P value
Employee Education Cognition	0.54	.094	5.83	0.000***

#### 4.7. The Relationships among Education Training Cognition, Service Quality and Customer

##### Satisfaction

As shown in Table 4, after the structural equation pattern analysis, the path coefficient was 0.53, and t value was 7.77 greater than 3 ( $p < .05$ ). The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction, the path coefficient was 0.98, and the t value was 6.57 greater than 3 ( $p < .05$ ), which is statistically significant. According to (Chen, 2005), when the two path coefficients reached a significant level at the same time, and the t values were all greater than 3, the product of the two path coefficients must be significant, so the result showed that the mediation effect of service quality was established. This article assumed that  $H_4$  was supported.

**Table 4:** Regression Analysis Results for the Relationship of Education Training Cognition, Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

path		Beta	Error	t value	P value
Employee Education Cognition	Customer Satisfaction	0.01	.076	0.15	.880
Employee Education Cognition	Service Quality	0.53	0.07	72.34	0.000***
Service Quality	Customer Satisfaction	0.98	0.14	6.57	0.000***

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This article was based on the consumers of a chain restaurant as the participants in Tainan, Taiwan to explore, through questionnaire, the relationship between consumers' perceptions on employees' education and training and service quality. The research results have showed that consumers' awareness on employees' education and training are positively related to service quality. Through regression analysis, it was found that consumers' perception of employees' education and training had a positive and significant impact on service quality, which also verifies the hypothesis of this article. This proved that education and training can improve the quality of service and at the same time upgrade customer satisfaction. Business managers should treat employees as "internal customers" with empathy, regard each department as an "internal product" and then encourage employees to communicate each other and promote with employees through education and training. It is necessary to meet the needs and expectations of employees which could indirectly affect the work attitude and satisfaction before achieving the overall evaluation of customers and meet the needs of customers. Under this condition, the business can grow steadily in the fierce market competition (Wang , Chang, Kuo and Chang, 2018).



The hospitality is a service industry. Employees and customers need to interact with each other from time to time. The quality of service that customers feel is even through face-to-face contact. In the future, customers will have higher requirements for services, leading to more and more attention to the planning of education and training in various industries, especially for chain stores, which have standardized service processes. For this purpose, business must enhance their professional capabilities by continuously strengthening the employee's education and training. Business should also understand the quality of service they need to pay to meet consumers' needs (Wu and Bao, 2016). For the employees, the business should give a grateful and affirmative support. Also, the education and training should be continued to achieve the goal of sustainable business.

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