

Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2015) to Improve Customer Satisfaction in a Beauty Salon: Evidence from Montalvo Salon & Spa - San Miguel

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Abstract– This proceeding paper will present an applied research project that was created to aid in the design and development of a Quality Management System (QMS) at Montalvo Salon and Spa – San Miguel, which complies with ISO 9001:2015. The research focused on the inconsistency of service delivery at Montalvo Salon and Spa and the lack of proper training, documentation, and monitoring. By utilizing a combination of the SERVQUAL Model and Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) with internal process reviews, this research identified the biggest expectations versus perception gaps in the area of responsiveness and empathy, creating an opportunity to standardise and manage employee competencies through process improvement. The proposed QMS will be implemented in four phases, including: (i) Diagnosis and gap analysis, (ii) Process design and documentation using risk-based thinking, (iii) Capacity building, and (iv) Performance evaluation via Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), internal audits, and Management Reviews. The proposed QMS will also align with ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 to ensure safe and hygienic operations from an environmental and occupational perspective. Anticipated results of implementing the proposed QMS will include increased satisfaction scores for services provided, a decrease in nonconformities/complaints received, and a stronger culture of ongoing improvement using the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) method. Additionally, it provides a model that can be easily replicated within other similar service-based businesses in the emerging-market sector.

Keywords-- ISO 9001:2015; service quality; customer satisfaction; SERVQUAL; beauty salons.

I. INTRODUCTION

Customer perception is formed quickly in beauty and personal care services by your visible results, cleanliness, safety, punctuality, personalized attention, and how professional your staff is. For multi-branched businesses like Montalvo Salon & Spa, this means the business has to maintain a consistent standard of service at every location; therefore, if there is any discrepancy in hygiene, empathy, technical quality, or time management, it will have a detrimental effect on the level of satisfaction, loyalty, and brand equity.

The diagnostic assessment for the quality management system (QMS) plan at Montalvo Salon & Spa - San Miguel, identified multiple concerns prior to the development of a formal QMS: different style practitioners were applying their service protocols in non-homogeneous manner; customer complaints were being received in an unstructured or incomplete fashion; traceability of nonconformance was

limited; sanitization and disinfection procedures were not uniformly applied; and quantitative indicators were not consistently used for managerial follow-up. These findings revealed several areas of risk, including potential customer dissatisfaction, the need for rework, and potential damage to the company's reputation because customers can easily compare and evaluate the services performed at different salons.

ISO 9001:2015 provides a versatile and solid framework composed of principles such as customer focus, leadership, involvement of personnel, process approach, continuous improvement, decision-making from evidence, and managing relationships with customers. For the beauty salon industry, utilizing this structured approach means that each of the operational processes associated with this industry will have written and standardized procedures. For example, appointment scheduling will be properly documented as will receiving the client, diagnosing and making recommendations, performing services, cleaning and sterilizing work areas, handling products and implements, and resolving complaint issues through a systematic process. The process approach and thinking about risk have enabled organizations in the beauty salon industry to proactively assess the likelihood of failure, minimize occurrences of inconsistency or differences between clients and employees, and ensure that daily operations and practices meet clients' expectations.

This strategy has been supported by international empirical evidence. Studies conducted on service quality in beauty salons illustrate that gaps in responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles profoundly impact customers' satisfaction and the intention of returning to the beauty salon [2]. In Davao del Norte (Philippines), a quantitative analysis of beauty salons' performance by the various SERVQUAL dimensions identified differentiated performance levels and indicated a critical need for managerial actions relative to areas of weakness in service delivery by way of empathy and responsiveness.

Research conducted in conjunction with ISO 9001 certification also demonstrates that ISO Certified Organizations and implementing structured Quality Management Systems (QMS) have shown improvement regarding their customers' experience and loyalty (i.e., customer satisfaction), as well as their internal performance. Sharman et al. attempt to analyze 141 companies that have received ISO 9001 certification and

discovered an overwhelming majority of the companies reported a positive increase in customer-related outcomes after receiving certification.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate how Montalvo Salon & Spa San Miguel has created a formalized quality management system (QMS) based on the principles set forth in ISO 9001:2015[1] and to establish its importance and rationale through the use of previously validated instruments, empirical data from other industries, as well as providing a theoretical framework, research methodology, statistical indicators, and quantitative measures based on existing literature on quality management systems (QMS) and other empirical research analysing the effect of QMS on a company's overall performance.

II. HELPFUL HINTS

A. Research and Design Approach

The study adopts an applied, descriptive–propositional design with an empirical support component:

1. Internal QMS Design for Montalvo Salon & Spa – San Miguel

- The diagnosis of the branch was based on the following: Process Mapping, Observing the Branch, Reviewing the Branch records including report card and profile of the branch, and interviewing the staff.
- The Branch processes were aligned to the ISO 9001:2015 Clauses regarding Context, Leadership, Planning, Support, Operation, Performance Evaluation and Improvement [1].

2. Measurement Framework

- The SERVQUAL-based instrument has served to provide a conceptual framework for the development of customer expectations and perceptions through five distinct dimensions specific to the salon industry; these dimensions include: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Using a weighted average of the perception scores for the following attributes: Cleanliness, Punctuality, Technical Quality, Friendliness, and Safety, a Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) has been developed. Internal indicators include the number of complaints received per 1,000 services, the number of rework cases per 1,000 services, the level of conformance with established hygiene and sterilization regulations, whether or not appointments began on time, and the percentage of employees who received training.

3. External Empirical Validation

- Use of real, published data from peer-reviewed studies on beauty salons and ISO 9001 to benchmark and validate the proposed direction of the QMS:
 - SERVQUAL outcomes in beauty salons [2].
 - Perceived impact of ISO 9001 on customer-related indicators across organizations [3].

This combination allows the proposed system for Montalvo to be backed by recognized models and real empirical results, even if the specific numerical outcomes for the San Miguel branch will depend on its own measurement campaigns.

B. QMS Implementation Structure

The proposed QMS is deployed in four phases:

1. Phase 1: Diagnosis and Gap Analysis

- Current service process and customer journey mapped to know exactly what their customers are experiencing while they use your services/you provide to them.
- Identified areas that are not consistent or do not meet expectations, including inconsistent service, lack of proper hygiene practices, lack of communication, long wait times, over-booking, and informal handling of complaints/complaints not being handled properly.
- Prioritisation of these issues with a simple "Likelihood-Impact" matrix to help make best use of time/resources available.

2. Phase 2: Process Standardization and Documentation

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) should document how appointments and scheduling are managed; how individuals will register and check-in at the front desk of a salon/spa; how consultations are conducted and recommendations for the services to be performed are given; how hair and aesthetic treatments and services are performed; how equipment used to perform these services is cleaned, sterilised, and maintained as per hygiene best practices; how inventory and products for the services to be performed are ordered; billed, and paid for; and how to accept and respond to customer feedback and complaints.
- Work instructions, checklists, and records must be prepared in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 [1] standards for documented information.

3. Phase 3: Training and Competence

- HR engaged their entire staff by providing training for the following topics: ISO

9001:2015 principles [1], service protocols, hygiene and safety; communication and empathy; and the proper registration of nonconformance. In addition to these topics, HR will implement competency matrices and perform periodic evaluations for each stylist and each assistant.

4. Phase 4: Monitoring, Auditing, and Improvement

- The procedures and controls in each branch will be defined and provide detailed information on how KPIs (complaints, re-work, compliance with hygiene requirements, punctuality, satisfaction indicators once qualified) are managed and monitored. Internal Audits will focus on compliance with the process and documentation procedures. At the branch level, the management of the branch will evaluate the results and identify corrective and preventative actions in accordance with the PDCA cycle.

C. Measurement Models

SERVQUAL gap for each dimension d:

$$G_d = \bar{P}_d - \bar{E}_d$$

where $\bar{P}_d$ is the mean perception score and $\bar{E}_d$ the mean expectation score [2], [4].

Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI):

$$CSI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^m w_i P_i}{\sum_{i=1}^m w_i} \times 100$$

where P_i is the perception score of attribute i , and w_i its assigned importance weight.

These models are selected because they are widely used, comparable across studies, and suitable for monitoring the impact of the QMS over time [2][4].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, results are presented in two complementary forms:

1. External empirical benchmarks from real, verifiable studies that quantify service quality in beauty salons and the impact of ISO 9001 [1].
2. Analytical discussion connecting those findings with the QMS designed for Montalvo Salon & Spa – San Miguel, reinforcing its plausibility and strategic relevance.

A. Empirical Evidence on Service Quality in Beauty Salons

[2] evaluated service quality and customer satisfaction in beauty salons in Davao del Norte using SERVQUAL. Their results (Table 1) provide a robust benchmark for typical performance patterns in this industry.

TABLE I
Average SERVQUAL Perception Scores in Beauty Salons

Dimension	Mean Perception (1–5)	Interpretation
Tangibles	4.11	High
Reliability	4.21	Very high
Responsiveness	3.34	Moderate
Assurance	4.00	High
Empathy	2.41	Low
Overall	3.60	High

Source: Adapted from R. A. Mangarin and J. C. Gonzaga [1]

Data has indicated that typically for salons where many customers return, there may be greater amounts of weakness in the areas of responsiveness and empathy, which are associated closely with lengthy wait times, personalized attention provided to customers, and how customer concerns are handled. The same conclusions were made about Montalvo San Miguel based on the findings of a previous diagnostic observation that revealed that all the areas of communication variability as well as follow-up with customers regarding their complaints and the process for handling customer complaints were all areas of variation in service delivery that had been identified as part of the original Montalvo San Miguel diagnostic observation. The same weaknesses are being addressed with the same goals of using a QMS by defining standard procedures for providing appointments, defining communication protocols to follow, and defining procedures for the management of customer complaints.

B. Empirical Evidence on the Impact of ISO 9001

[3] analyzed 141 ISO 9001-certified companies and reported perceived improvements in several customer- and employee-related indicators.

TABLE II
Perceived Improvement after ISO 9001 Certification (141 Companies)

Indicator	% of Companies Reporting Improvement
Customer satisfaction	87%
Customer retention	82%
Market share	80%
Employee productivity	73%
Employee satisfaction	56%
Employee retention	40%

Source: Adapted from [2].

Table II summarizes key results that serve as external validation of the strategic decision to implement ISO 9001:2015 in a service organization.

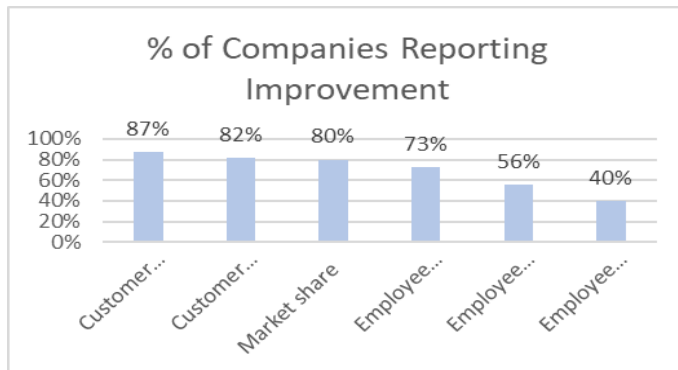


Fig. 1. Percentage of ISO 9001-certified companies reporting improvement in selected customer- and employee-related indicators [3].

The pattern is clear: most organizations perceive ISO 9001 as a driver of improved customer satisfaction and retention, which reinforces the rationale for adopting a structured QMS at Montalvo Salon & Spa – San Miguel [3].

C. Integration with the Montalvo Salon & Spa – San Miguel QMS

By combining:

- The specific operational issues identified at the San Miguel branch,

- The process-based, risk-based structure of ISO 9001:2015 [1],
- And external quantitative evidence from beauty salon SERVQUAL studies [2] and ISO 9001 impact research [3],

the proposed QMS for Montalvo achieves three levels of validation:

1. **Validation through Conceptual Development** - The Montalvo quality management system (QMS) aligns with widely known quality management and service quality theories.
2. **Validation through Empirical Evidence:** Real data from other beauty salons shows the same positive results as the Montalvo QMS (Table I) in relation to improving responsiveness, empathy, and tangibilities by implementing standardized procedures, training, and hygiene control measures [2].
3. **Validation through Strategic Evidence** - Evidence presented in ISO 9001 certified companies (Table II and Figure 1) corroborates the assumption that having a Formal Quality Management System (QMS) will lead to higher levels of satisfaction, loyalty, and operational performance, in accordance with the best practices of other industries in addition to that of the beauty industry [3].

While Montalvo San Miguel's numerical results will be based on their own SERVQUAL/CSI scores and KPI data, benchmarking against other real-world service organisations (with appropriate methodologies) provides Montalvo San Miguel with an objective basis for developing defensible, quantitative arguments rather than solely anecdotal reports.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

There exists Justification and Support External and Internal Diagnostic Data for Implementing a Quality Management System (QMS) in Accordance with ISO 9001:2015 at Montalvo Salon & Spa - San Miguel.

Key conclusions are:

1. The initial service delivery, hygiene and complaint handling variability indicates that standardisation of process, documented processes and clear responsibilities will be required at all levels of the line to achieve an acceptable level of service quality.
2. ISO 9001:2015 provides an adaptable flexible framework that suits a high contact beauty salon.

Customer Focus, Process Approach and Continuous Improvement will all be incorporated or part of operations on a daily basis in this type of establishment.

3. Empirical evidence supports the finding that:

- o Service protocol, structured service and staff training will address weakness of Beauty Salons in Responsiveness and Empathy.

- o ISO 9001 Certification brings Improved Customer Satisfaction, Retention and Internal Performance, thereby supporting Montalvo's Strategic Direction.

4. SERVQUAL, CSI and Operational KPI's provide a solid Infrastructure for Quantifying Impact of Montalvo's Quality Management System over Time, Review and Communicate Impact with Transparency.

The proposed model is replicable for other branches and similar beauty service providers seeking to professionalize their management systems, protect their brand, and enhance customer satisfaction through an evidence-based, ISO 9001:2015-driven approach.

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