

Quality of customer service in Malecón 2000 commercial premises

Calidad en el servicio al cliente en locales comerciales del Malecón 2000

María José Menéndez Ledesma*
Magaly de Jesús Romo Álvarez*
Sheylah May-Ling Hoppe*

ABSTRACT

The quality of customer service is fundamental for the complete experience of the buyer. This result responds to the research project "Training programme to improve customer service in the commercial premises of Malecon 2000 in the city of Guayaquil" of the Higher Technology in Sales course at TES. The objective of this study is to analyse the perception of citizens on the existence of clear and concise signage at key points of the Malecon 2000 in Guayaquil, the sample was composed of young people, adults and seniors in a range of 20 to 70 years old residents in the city of Guayaquil; a descriptive and exploratory type of research was applied with a descriptive quantitative technique. The instrument used was a survey designed in Google Forms. According to the results obtained, and the comparative authors, it is evident that the lack of information and signage in Malecon 2000 is a significant problem, significant concerns were observed regarding the cleanliness and maintenance of public areas, the availability of guards and the perception of security.

Keywords: Quality, Service, Descriptive, Guayaquil

* Msc. Tecnológico Universitario Espiritu Santo
correomjmenendez@tes.edu.ec, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1744-3222>

*Msc. Tecnológico Universitario Espiritu Santo
mdromo@tes.edu.ec, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6007-0295>

* Msc. Tecnológico Universitario Espiritu Santo
shoppe@tes.edu.ec, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0896-8388>

REVISTA TECNOLÓGICA
ciencia y educación
Edwards Deming

ISSN: 2600-5867

Atribución/Reconocimiento-NoComercial- CompartirIgual 4.0 Licencia Pública Internacional — CC

BY-NC-SA 4.0

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/legalcode.es>

Edited by: Tecnológico Superior Corporativo
Edwards Deming

July - December Vol. 8 - 2 - 2024

<https://revista-edwardsdeming.com/index.php/ese>
e-ISSN: 2576-0971

Received: February 29, 2024

Approved: June 20, 2024

Page 1-9

RESUMEN

La calidad en la atención al cliente es fundamental para la experiencia completa del comprador. Este resultado responde al proyecto de investigación “Programa de capacitación para mejorar el servicio al cliente en los locales comerciales del Malecón 2000 de la ciudad de Guayaquil” de la carrera Tecnología Superior en Ventas del TES. El objetivo de este estudio es analizar la percepción de los ciudadanos sobre la existencia de señalización clara y concisa en puntos clave del Malecón 2000 de Guayaquil, la muestra estuvo compuesta por jóvenes, adultos y adultos mayores en un rango de 20 a 70 años residentes en la ciudad de Guayaquil; se aplicó un tipo de investigación Descriptiva y exploratoria con una técnica de carácter cuantitativo descriptivo. El instrumento utilizado fue la encuesta diseñada en Google Forms. Según los resultados obtenidos, y la comparativa los autores, es evidente que la carencia de información y señalización en Malecón 2000 es una problemática significativa, se observaron preocupaciones significativas en cuanto a la limpieza y el mantenimiento de las áreas públicas, la disponibilidad de guardias y la percepción de seguridad.

Palabras clave: Calidad, Servicio, Descriptiva, Guayaquil

INTRODUCTION

Customer service plays a crucial role in the overall customer experience. When customers are served with care, safety and friendliness, a feeling of closeness and trust is generated. This emotional bond established with the customer not only increases customer satisfaction, but can also foster long-term loyalty to the shop or shopping area as is the case in this study.

In addition, ease of orientation in a retail environment is critical to customer comfort and convenience. When a retail location has clear and concise signage that allows for easy recognition of each area and point of interest, the customer experiences instant satisfaction. This ease of knowing where you are and how to get around creates a positive and welcoming environment, which contributes to a more pleasant shopping experience.

Considering the geographical extension and the touristic and commercial importance of Malecón 2000 in the city of Guayaquil, it is evident the relevance of recognising the lack of information and signage as a significant issue that impacts not only local visitors, but also the merchants operating in the surrounding area.

Guayaquil's Malecon 2000, being a focal point for commercial activities, attracts a large number of local visitors seeking to enjoy its services and participate in commercial activities. However, the lack of clear information and adequate signage hinders visitors' experience when navigating the Malecon 2000 and accessing its various services and points of interest.

This issue not only affects visitor satisfaction and experience, but also directly impacts merchants through the flow of customers to maintain their businesses. Lack of signage can make it difficult for visitors to find commercial establishments, which can result in decreased sales and lost business opportunities for local businesses.

In addition, the lack of adequate information and signage can contribute to a negative perception of the Malecon 2000 as a commercial destination, which can affect its ability to attract visitors and potential customers in the future; the lack of information and signage represents an issue that not only affects the experience of visitors and local customers, but also negatively impacts the viability and success of commercial businesses in the area. It is crucial to address this issue by implementing effective solutions that improve accessibility, navigation and the overall visitor and customer experience. It is hoped to obtain an analysis of citizens' perception of the existence of clear and concise signage at key points along the Malecon 2000, providing relevant information on available services, points of interest, hours of operation and security measures, in order to understand the customer experience and facilitate customer orientation.

The quality of customer service on the Malecon 2000 is a relevant issue because of its significant impact on the experience of visitors and local residents. The Malecon 2000 is an important commercial destination and a landmark for the community. In addition, the quality of customer service not only affects the perception of customers, but also the satisfaction of citizens who use the Malecon 2000 for various commercial activities.

The main idea is to address the quality of customer service, to understand customer perception, to promote a customer-friendly environment and economic activity. By ensuring that visitors and residents receive quality service, customer loyalty is fostered, user satisfaction is increased, and the reputation of the Malecon 2000 as a favourable and accessible destination is strengthened. In addition, improving customer service quality can contribute to local economic development by stimulating spending and increasing demand for services and products.

To address customer service quality, a number of strategies need to be implemented. These include conducting periodic assessments of the quality of service offered by businesses and establishments on the Malecon 2000, providing accessible and ongoing training to staff in customer service skills, establishing quality standards and feedback procedures to ensure continuous improvement, and promoting active community participation in identifying areas for improvement and implementing solutions. In addition, it is important to use tools such as satisfaction surveys and feedback analysis to gather information on users' perceptions and take corrective action as necessary. Addressing quality in customer service requires a holistic approach that involves multiple stakeholders and relies on constant feedback from users to ensure effective and lasting

results.

Service, along with quality, is essential for any organisation, as they are fundamental aspects that contribute to maintaining and enhancing its reputation. The constant commitment to provide exceptional service in an environment focused on customer satisfaction, both internal and external, is what drives a company towards success and excellence (Florez, L., 2021).

Exceptional service and quality are fundamental pillars of a company's reputation and growth. By maintaining high standards in both internal and external customer service, an organisation demonstrates its commitment to the satisfaction and well-being of all stakeholders. This not only helps to retain customers and strengthen business relationships, but also improves staff morale and promotes a positive working environment. Ultimately, this leads to increased customer loyalty, profitability and the long-term success of the company.

According to Espinel & Ferie (2020), in comparison to the previous author, it is argued that, in order to achieve successful customer care, it is crucial to consider various elements that are applicable to companies in any economic sector. These factors include leadership, efficiency in operations, among other aspects, with a particular emphasis on the importance of human capital, which must be clearly defined.

Success in customer service is fundamental for any company, and to achieve it, it is crucial to consider a series of key elements. According to the author, regardless of the economic sector in which they operate, companies must focus on aspects such as effective leadership, efficiency in their activities and, especially, well-defined human capital. This last point highlights the importance of having a committed and skilled team capable of providing exceptional service that meets the needs and expectations of customers. Ultimately, by prioritising these elements, companies can strengthen their market position and foster strong relationships with their customers, thus driving their long-term success.

Another relevant aspect to consider in relation to customer service is that put forward by Abarca, E. et al. (2020), who describe the concept of hygiene/environmental factor as those physical elements that impact in some way on customer service delivery and can positively or negatively influence the level of customer satisfaction.

Contrasting this approach with the issue of customer service quality, it is important to recognise that the physical environment also plays a fundamental role. Malecon 2000 is a major commercial destination, and the quality of the physical environment, including cleanliness, safety and accessibility, can greatly influence the customer experience. Therefore, improving and maintaining a clean, safe and attractive environment of the Malecon 2000 is essential to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty, an issue that is made difficult to manage due to its geographic location and municipal measures.

A significant factor contributing to poor customer service quality is the excessive workload imposed on employees, which directly impacts their ability to effectively perform their daily duties (De La Vera, J. & Cyprus, N., 2022). From a comparative view with the subject of study, it is important to recognise that overworked employees can

be a factor that negatively affects the quality of service provided in this environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is descriptive and exploratory research. This research seeks to describe characteristics, behaviours or situations, as well as to explore a topic or phenomenon on which there is little information available. The sample will be composed of young people, adults and older adults between the ages of 20 and 70 living in the city of Guayaquil, as they represent a significant part of the population that could interact with the services offered at the Malecón 2000.

The decision to frame the present study as descriptive and exploratory research is fundamental to a thorough understanding of the topic in question, which seems to lack a sufficient amount of information. By opting for descriptive research, the aim is to detail and analyse in depth the characteristics, behaviours and situations related to the topic of study. This approach will make it possible to identify patterns, trends and relationships between variables that may be essential for a better understanding of the phenomenon in question.

The choice of the sample, which includes young people, adults and older adults in the age range of 20 to 70 years and residing in the city of Guayaquil, is appropriate as it covers a broad representation of the population that could interact with the services offered at Malecón 2000. By including different age groups, a more complete and diverse understanding of users' experiences, perceptions and needs is ensured.

The technique selected for this study is quantitative descriptive in nature. This technique is appropriate for collecting data from a large and diverse sample, allowing a large number of participants to be reached quickly and efficiently. The instrument used was the survey designed in Google Forms, which will include questions related to the quality of customer service at Malecón 2000. A Likert scale will be used to measure the opinion and perception of the participants on different aspects of the service. The questions will be designed to obtain detailed information on users' satisfaction, experience and expectations in relation to customer service.

The use of a survey designed in Google Forms as a data collection instrument is a practical and effective choice (Cisneros, A., et al., 2022). This platform allows reaching a wide audience quickly and easily, which facilitates the collection of data from a representative sample of users. In addition, the survey can be distributed and completed remotely, which increases accessibility for participants and reduces potential logistical barriers.

The inclusion of a Likert scale in the survey is an appropriate choice for measuring participants' opinions and perceptions of different aspects of customer service. This scale provides a quantitative measure of participants' responses, which facilitates statistical analysis of the data and the identification of significant trends or patterns (Matas, A., 2018).

The combination of these techniques and methodological tools has the potential to provide valuable insights that can inform decisions and actions to improve the customer

experience in this important business destination, which in turn helps to boost the country's economy.

RESULTS

After the elaboration and application of the survey carried out in google forms we found results, which in turn create a gap for analysis and comparison with other results of different theses and scientific works. According to the request to evaluate "the friendliness and courtesy of the customer service staff at the Malecón 2000", 40% were neutral, 35% considered it satisfactory, while only 5% considered it unsatisfactory.

With regard to the usefulness of the signage and information provided for orientation, 65% of the participants found it useful, while 15% rated it as neutral and 10% considered it not very useful. In terms of accessibility of the facilities and services available, 50% of the participants found them accessible, 30% rated them as neutral and 20% found them inaccessible.

Most participants found the signage and information provided useful for orientation. This suggests that there is a positive perception of the effectiveness of these tools in helping visitors navigate the area. Half of the participants considered the facilities and services at the Malecón 2000 to be accessible. However, one third of the respondents expressed neutrality in this respect, which could indicate that there is still room for improvement in this area.

When assessing the adequacy of the information provided on the points of interest and services available, 40% of the participants considered it sufficient, 30% found it insufficient, 20% expressed a neutral opinion and 10% rated it as very insufficient. Regarding the availability of maps and tourist guides for orientation on the Malecón 2000, 40% of the participants found it sufficient, 20% found it insufficient, 20% very insufficient and 20% expressed a neutral opinion.

While 40% of the participants found the information sufficient, 30% considered it insufficient. This suggests that there is a split in the perception of the quality of information provided, which could indicate a need to improve the quantity and quality of information available to visitors. Perceptions of the availability of maps and tourist guides are fairly split, with 40% finding them sufficient and 40% finding them scarce or very scarce. This indicates an opportunity to improve the availability of orientation resources for visitors.

With respect to the cleanliness and maintenance of public areas on the Malecón 2000 in Guayaquil, 35% of participants were satisfied, 15% expressed a neutral opinion, and 50% were dissatisfied. Regarding the availability of trained personnel to provide information and assistance, 60% of the participants considered it very insufficient, while 40% expressed a neutral opinion.

While 35% of participants are satisfied with the cleanliness and maintenance of public areas, 50% expressed dissatisfaction. This suggests that cleanliness and maintenance can be significant areas of improvement to enhance the customer experience. Most

participants perceive a lack of trained staff to provide information and assistance. This indicates the need for improved staff training to ensure better customer service.

In terms of safety, 35% of participants considered it very unsafe, 20% as unsafe, 15% rated it as safe and 30% expressed a neutral opinion. In relation to the range of services available, 50% of participants rated it as extensive, 15% as very extensive, 15% as limited and 5% as very limited.

Perceptions of security are divided, with 35% considering it safe, 15% very unsafe and 30% expressing neutrality. This suggests that there is room for improvement in the perception of security among visitors. The majority of participants perceive a wide variety of services available. However, 20% consider the offer to be limited or very limited, indicating that there may be areas where the range of services could be expanded.

Finally, in terms of recommendation as a tourist destination, 20% of the participants said they would probably not recommend it, while 40% said they would probably recommend it. Forty percent of participants would probably recommend Malecon 2000 as a tourist destination, while 20% would probably not. This suggests that the overall customer experience may be mixed and that there are opportunities to improve visitor perceptions.

From the data collected, it is evident that the lack of information and signage is a considerable problem that impacts both local residents and businesses operating in the region. Although the majority of respondents found the signage and navigational information provided beneficial, there was divergence in relation to the adequacy of information and ease of access to the facilities and services available. There were also significant concerns about the hygiene and maintenance of public areas, the availability of qualified staff and the perception of safety.

In the thesis by Abad, M., & Pincay, D. (2014), on the "Analysis of internal and external customer service quality for the proposal of a quality management model in an insurance company in Guayaquil", the results revealed that the staff working in these areas do not have a good attitude towards the other departments of the organisation, which may be the reason for the low perception of service quality.

In the authors' research, it was identified that the staff of the insurance company studied had an unfavourable attitude towards other departments in the organisation. This finding suggests possible problems in internal communication, interdepartmental collaboration and organisational culture, which could negatively affect customer service quality. The low perception of service quality could be influenced by these negative attitudes and lack of collaboration among employees.

While this research focuses on the internal attitudes and relationships of staff in an insurance company, the Malecon 2000 study addresses the infrastructure and management of public services in a commercial destination. Both studies highlight areas for improvement in customer service quality, but in different contexts and dimensions.

According to Gonzales, R., (2017). In his thesis on "Service quality and customer satisfaction in the timber trading company" it could be evidenced in the analysis of his results that service quality impacts on customer satisfaction.

The contrast between the study on the lack of information and signage and the research conducted by Gonzales, R. (2017) on service quality and customer satisfaction in a timber trading company reveals differences in the approaches and contexts of the studies, as well as in the specific aspects analysed, highlighting that aspects such as satisfaction and information are equally relevant and deserve to be analysed in greater depth in future research.

The authors Gonzales, L & Huanca, E., (2020). In their thesis on "Service quality and its relationship with restaurant consumer satisfaction" found that the correlation analysis (...) between service quality and consumer satisfaction examines that the correlation between service quality and consumer satisfaction has a moderate positive relationship. By comparing both studies, it can be inferred that improving service quality by addressing concerns about information and signage, safety and staff training could have a positive impact on overall visitor satisfaction. Similar to the case of restaurants, where service quality is positively related to customer satisfaction, a focus on improving service quality can enhance the customer experience and foster greater satisfaction and loyalty to the destination.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results obtained, it is evident that the lack of information and signage on the Malecón 2000 is a significant issue affecting both local visitors and the traders operating in the area. While most participants found the signage and information provided useful for orientation, there was a split on the adequacy of the information and accessibility of the facilities and services available. In addition, there were significant concerns about the cleanliness and maintenance of public areas, the availability of trained staff and the perception of safety.

In terms of the study's objective, which was to analyse citizens' perception of the existence of clear and concise signage at key points on the Malecón 2000, as well as its impact on customer experience and ease of orientation, the results provide valuable information on these aspects. While most participants found the signage useful, they also highlighted areas for improvement in terms of adequacy of information, accessibility of facilities and safety.

In conclusion, the results obtained in this study provide a detailed overview of citizens' perceptions of the signage and information available on the Malecón 2000. However, they also highlight critical areas that require attention and action by local authorities and retailers to improve the customer experience and ease of orientation. Therefore, this information collected fulfils the objective of the study by providing a deeper understanding of the current situation and perceived needs of visitors and traders.

REFERENCES

- Abad Acosta, M. G., & Pincay Díaz, D. E. (2014). *Análisis de calidad del servicio al cliente interno y externo para propuesta de modelo de gestión de calidad en una empresa de seguros de Guayaquil* (Bachelor's thesis). Recuperado de: <https://dspace.ups.edu.ec/bitstream/123456789/7451/1/UPS-GT000777.pdf>
- Gonzales Guevara, R. V. (2017). *Calidad de servicio y satisfacción del cliente en la empresa comercializadora de madera Arbolito SAC Chiclayo-2016*. Recuperado de: <https://repositorio.uss.edu.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12802/4485/Gonzales%20Guevara%20Robinson%20Vladimir.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Gonzales Carachule, L. M., & Huanca Vilca, E. D. (2020). *La calidad del servicio y su relación con la satisfacción de los consumidores de restaurantes de pollos a la brasa de Mariano Melgar, Arequipa 2018*. Recuperado de: https://repositorio.utp.edu.pe/bitstream/handle/20.500.12867/3031/Lucero%20Gonzales_Elena%20Huanca_Tesis_Titulo%20Profesional_Titulo%20Profesional_2020.pdf?sequence=1
- Florez, L. K. J. (2021). *La importancia de la calidad y el servicio*. *Revista Neuronum*, 7(3), 37-41. Recuperado de: <http://eduneuro.com/revista/index.php/revistanuronum/article/viewFile/335/422>
- Espinel, J. D. E., & Ferie, C. P. (2020). *Gestión de la calidad en los servicios de atención al cliente. Caso Cooperativa Chone Ltda. Polo del Conocimiento: Revista científico-profesional*, 5(8), 42-65. Recuperado de: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/7554392.pdf>
- Abarca, E., Acosta, A., & Bajaña, Y. (2020). *Determinación de los factores que influyen en la satisfacción del cliente de servicios bancarios de la ciudad de Guayaquil*. *Revista Universidad de Guayaquil*, 131(2), 41-57. Recuperado de: <https://revistas.ug.edu.ec/index.php/rug/article/download/1360/1736>
- De La Vera Aray, J. L., & Chipre Vera, N. B. (2022). *Efecto económico de las ordenanzas municipales con relación a la Asociación 5 de Septiembre de la Bahía, de Guayaquil, Ecuador* (Bachelor's thesis, Guayaquil: ULVR, 2022.). Recuperado de: <http://repositorio.ulvr.edu.ec/bitstream/44000/5866/1/T-ULVR-4805.pdf>
- Matas, A. (2018). *Diseño del formato de escalas tipo Likert: un estado de la cuestión*. *Revista electrónica de investigación educativa*, 20(1), 38-47. Recuperado de: https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S1607-40412018000100038&script=sci_arttext_plus&tlng=es
- Cisneros-Caicedo, A. J., Guevara-García, A. F., Urdánigo-Cedeño, J. J., & Garcés-Bravo, J. E. (2022). *Técnicas e Instrumentos para la Recolección de Datos que apoyan a la Investigación Científica en tiempo de Pandemia*. *Domino de las Ciencias*, 8(1), 1165-1185. Recuperado de: <https://dominiodelasciencias.com/ojs/index.php/es/article/download/2546/5714>