



Influencing factors of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in a Private School in Myanmar

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction at Kaung Sone Private School, one of the private basic education centers in Myanmar. Using a descriptive cross-sectional design with quantitative methods, data were collected through structured survey questionnaires from parents and guardians ($n = 75$). Service quality was measured using the SERVQUAL model across five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Multiple regression analysis revealed that tangibility ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and empathy ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.05$) had the strongest positive effects on customer satisfaction, while the overall model explained 62% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.62$). Although respondents reported general satisfaction across all five dimensions, tangibility and empathy emerged as the most critical factors shaping parental perceptions. The study contributes to understanding how Myanmar's parents and guardians evaluate private school services, offering insights into their unique expectations and priorities in the education sector.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Service Quality, SERVQUAL

Introduction

Private education in Myanmar plays a growing role in shaping student outcomes, but questions of quality and accountability remain central. Parents increasingly choose private schools because of perceptions of better academic results, stronger engagement, and improved facilities compared to public institutions. At the same time, widespread reliance on shadow education and inconsistent regulation have created pressure for private schools to demonstrate their value beyond academics. Service quality, therefore, becomes a key determinant of parental satisfaction and trust. Understanding how specific dimensions of service such as tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy affect satisfaction is critical for schools seeking to strengthen their reputation and meet parental expectations.

Problem Statement

Kaung Sone Private School, established in 2013, has faced multiple challenges linked to shifting government policies, limited oversight, and growing parental dissatisfaction. Parents have raised repeated complaints about unsatisfactory services, yet the school has never carried out a systematic study to evaluate its service quality or customer satisfaction levels. This lack of assessment poses a significant risk, as unresolved service issues can erode trust and damage the school's competitiveness in an increasingly crowded education market. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates which service quality dimensions most strongly influence parental satisfaction, providing the school with evidence-based insights for improvement.



Organization Introduction

Kaung Sone Private school is one of the private basic education centers in Myanmar. It was founded since 2013. There are three branches such as Kaung Sone (Ma Naw Heri, Ahlone), Kaung Sone (Mingalar Taung Nyunt) and Kaung Zone (Pu Zuun Htaung). They have their own management team including headmaster. Each school have their own unique management style. For this research, the research selected Kaung Sone (Ma Naw Heri, Ahlone) with 55 permanent staffs. School hours for Grade 10 are 7:30 to 11:30 am and Grade 8 and 9 is 1:00 to 4:30 pm.

Literature Review

Recent studies applying the SERVQUAL model in educational settings have highlighted the varying significance of its five dimensions tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy across different contexts (Dzakwan & Ubit, 2025; Feifei et al., 2022). In Myanmar, research on private higher education institutions indicates that tangibility and empathy significantly influence student satisfaction, suggesting that these dimensions are more predictive of satisfaction compared to reliability and assurance (Ko Ko et al., 2025). Similarly, studies in Southeast Asia, including Malaysia and the Philippines, have found that dimensions such as tangibility and empathy are more predictive of satisfaction compared to reliability and assurance, indicating that parents and students place higher value on visible facilities and personal interactions (Rasli & Kundi, 2021; Zhao & Kanjanapathy, 2024). These findings are consistent with research in other regions, such as Iran, Croatia, Kenya, and the Netherlands, which confirm that the importance of SERVQUAL dimensions varies depending on the cultural and institutional context (Nazarian & Zarei, 2025; Meštrović, 2024; Onditi & Wechuli, 2022; Schijns, 2021).

The SERVQUAL model posits that satisfaction arises from the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of service delivery, with different dimensions varying in importance depending on context and cultural expectations (Ismailova, 2025; Dzakwan & Ubit, 2025). These insights provide a theoretical foundation for the study's hypotheses (H1–H5), suggesting that in the context of Kaung Sone Private School, tangibility and empathy are likely to have a more significant impact on customer satisfaction than reliability, assurance, and responsiveness (Ko Ko et al., 2025). Therefore, enhancing tangible aspects of the school environment and fostering empathetic relationships between staff and parents are expected to lead to higher satisfaction levels, thereby informing strategies for service quality improvement in Myanmar's private education sector (Asadullah, 2025; Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge, 2025; Yi, 2025; Gürbüz, 2025; Stankovska & Kundi, 2024; Teeroovengadam & Kundi, 2019; Feifei et al., 2022; Dzakwan & Ubit, 2025).

Moreover, recent advancements in service quality assessment have introduced innovative methods to enhance the predictive accuracy of the SERVQUAL model. For instance, dynamic evaluation techniques using deep learning and sentiment analysis have been applied to assess student perceptions more precisely, capturing real-time feedback on service dimensions such as tangibility and empathy (Yi, 2025). These approaches highlight the growing importance of integrating technology into service quality measurement, allowing educational institutions to identify areas of improvement rapidly and tailor interventions to meet student and parent expectations. In the context of Myanmar's private schools, adopting such data-driven strategies could complement traditional SERVQUAL assessments, providing actionable insights that enhance both the learning environment and interpersonal engagement between staff, students, and parents (Gürbüz, 2025; Feifei et al., 2022).

Research Objectives

This study aims to analyze the current service quality condition of Kaung Sone Private School and identify gaps that need improvement in order to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction in the future. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the most influencing factors of service quality on customer satisfaction in Kaung Sone Private School.

2. To assess the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction.
3. To identify the effect of different service quality dimensions on overall customer satisfaction in Kaung Sone Private School.

Research Questions

Based on these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the most influencing service quality factors affecting customer satisfaction?
2. What is the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction?
3. How do different service quality dimensions affect customer satisfaction in Kaung Sone Private School?

Research Scope

Among the 438 private basic education schools in Myanmar, Kaung Sone Private School (Ma Naw Heri, Ahlone) was selected as the study site to explore the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction. The survey targeted only parents and guardians registered under students' names, as complaints and dissatisfaction primarily originated from them. To measure service quality and satisfaction, the study employed the SERVQUAL model, which captures five dimensions tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy providing a structured framework to evaluate customer perceptions in this school context.

Conceptual Framework

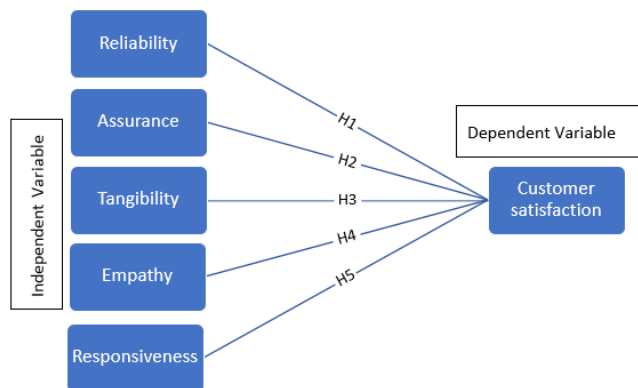


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses Development

Table 1: Hypotheses development

Hypotheses
H1: Reliability is significantly positive effected on customer satisfaction.
H2: Assurance is significantly positive effected on customer satisfaction.
H3: Tangibility is significantly positive effected on customer satisfaction.

H4: Empathy is significantly positive effected on customer satisfaction.

H5: Responsiveness is significantly positive effected on customer satisfaction.

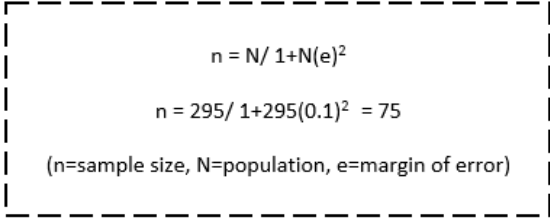
Methodology

Research Design and Approach

This study adopted a descriptive research design to investigate the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction at Kaung Sone Private School. A descriptive design is appropriate when examining characteristics of a phenomenon and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships among variables through statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2019). The research followed a deductive approach, moving from established theoretical principles such as the SERVQUAL model to specific hypotheses tested with quantitative data. This approach enabled structured and objective data collection while ensuring alignment with the study's objectives.

Research Method, Sampling, and Population

A quantitative method was employed, using structured survey questionnaires to collect numerical data. The study adopted a cross-sectional design, with data collected between August and December 2024. The target population consisted of 295 parents and guardians of students enrolled at Kaung Sone Private School, as recorded in the 2024 student registry. A sample of 75 participants was selected using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination and simple random sampling to ensure equal representation. While the sample size is relatively small, it was considered sufficient for preliminary statistical analysis and manageable within the study's constraints. The limitation of sample size is acknowledged and addressed in the discussion.



$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2$$

$$n = 295 / 1 + 295(0.1)^2 = 75$$

(n=sample size, N=population, e=margin of error)

Figure 2: Sample Size Calculation, Source: (Yamane, 1967)

Pilot Test

A pilot study was conducted with 10 participants to assess face validity and clarity of the questionnaire items prior to the main data collection. The purpose of the pilot was not to conduct reliability analysis but to ensure that wording, format, and structure of questions were comprehensible to respondents (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002). Feedback from the pilot informed minor revisions to improve clarity and consistency.

Data Collection Method

Data collection was carried out on the school premises with the prior approval of the school administration. Surveys were distributed in person before and after school hours to accommodate parents' availability. Participants were provided with clear instructions and an explanation of the study's purpose, and the researcher ensured that all questions were answered fully. Participation was voluntary, and written informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by coding responses and storing data securely.

Sources of Data

The study relied primarily on primary data collected directly from parents and guardians using structured questionnaires. Secondary data from academic articles, journals, and books were used to provide theoretical grounding and contextual insights. Secondary sources were employed for literature review purposes, while primary data formed the basis of statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using SPSS software (version 26). Reliability of the SERVQUAL scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics were generated to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and perceptions of service quality. Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. Finally, multiple regression analysis was applied to identify the most influential service quality dimensions affecting parental satisfaction. This combination of analyses allowed for both descriptive and inferential insights into the research objectives.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the school administration before conducting the study. Informed consent was secured from all participants after providing them with detailed information about the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of the research. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with responses coded to protect identities. Data were used strictly for academic purposes and stored securely to prevent unauthorized access.

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Participants (n = 75)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21–30 years	5	6.7
	31–40 years	39	52.0
	41–50 years	23	30.7
	51 years and above	8	10.6
Gender	Male	26	34.7
	Female	49	65.3
Education	High school	3	4.0
	Diploma	15	20.0
	Bachelor's degree	34	45.3
	Master's degree	23	30.7
Occupation	Business owner	41	54.7
	Private employee	18	24.0
	Government employee	8	10.6
	Dependent/Housewife	8	10.6
Monthly Income	Less than 300,000 MMK	7	9.3
	300,001 – 500,000 MMK	13	17.3
	500,001 – 700,000 MMK	23	30.7
	700,001 MMK and above	32	42.7

Explanation

The demographic profile shows that most participants were middle-aged, with over half (52%) between 31 and 40 years, followed by 41–50 years (31%). This suggests that the majority of parents and guardians are in their prime working years. In terms of gender, females dominated the survey, making up about two-thirds (65%), reflecting the stronger involvement of mothers or female guardians in school-related matters.

Educational qualifications were generally high, with nearly three-quarters holding bachelor's or master's degrees, which highlights an educated parent community likely to have high expectations regarding service quality. Occupational data show that more than half (55%) of respondents were business owners, followed by private employees (24%), while government employees and dependents each accounted for about 11%. This aligns with income findings, as a majority (73%) reported monthly earnings above 500,000 MMK, reflecting a financially stable group with capacity and willingness to invest in private education. Together, these results provide a clear profile of Kaung Sone School's parent community: educated, financially secure, and actively engaged in assessing educational quality.

Descriptive analysis

Reliability Dimension

Table 3: Results of Reliability Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Well programmed and systematic management system	4.35	1.046	III
A good relationship of School's staffs and the students	4.55	0.643	II
A good relationship between the school's staffs.	4.35	1.046	III
Strict policy to fulfill 75% roll call	4.73	0.445	I
Having strict rules and regulations.	4.35	1.046	III

Above table shows, the highest satisfaction level of participants is strict policy of roll call because of mean score 4.73 which is the highest score. The second highest score of reliability dimension is the relationship between the staffs of school and students because of mean score 4.55. the other three items like rule and regulation of school, relationship between every staff and well program and systematic management are the same which mean the participants are equally satisfied upon those factors of reliability dimension. These finding show that parents and guardians are highly satisfied for strict policy and relationship of their children which means students and the school's staffs.

Assurance Dimension

Table 4: Results of Assurance Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Well qualified Teachers	4.57	0.808	III
The tutors and guides are good at teaching	4.67	0.644	I
Enough study time	4.63	0.731	II
Appropriate ratio of students and teacher	4.53	0.664	IV
Assessment of effective monthly exams	3.96	1.289	V

The finding of table shows the teaching method or style of tutors and guides are the highest mean score of 4.67 while “enough study time” factor got 4.63 which is the second highest mean score. “Well qualified Teachers” got 4.57 mean scores while “appropriate ratio of students and teacher” got 4.53 mean scores. But “the effective assessment of monthly exams” got the lowest mean score of 3.96 when compares with other factors. The results of assurance dimension, the participants are highly satisfied with “teaching” in this school. In private school, teaching techniques and method of teachers is one of the vital points of survival factors for that school when compare with others private school. The parents and guardians also satisfied with giving enough study time for students which is also one of the important for students. For the rest factors, they are generally satisfied.

Tangibility Dimension

Table 5: Results of Tangibility Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Classroom layout is good	3.96	1.289	IV
School Bus is right time and safety.	4.49	0.665	II
CCTV for the students’ security.	4.24	1.089	III
Library with full of knowledgeable book	4.71	0.458	I
The social activities in school.	4.24	1.089	III

In accordance with the findings of above table, among 5 factors of tangibility dimension, Library is the highest mean score with 4.71 while the school bus is the second highest mean score with 4.49. The other two factors like social activities and CCTV are the same mean score with 4.24. The lowest mean score with 3.96 is classroom layout. The results show that parents and guardians are highly satisfied upon library which is also important and essential in every school. Therefore, all students can improve their knowledge and skills that are definitely necessary for their development. The participants are less satisfied with classroom layout even though the average mean score of class

room layout is above 3.5. It may be because of their high expectation when they compare with other international schools. Generally, they are satisfied with the rest factors such as school bus, CCTV and social activities of Kaung Sone Private school.

Empathy Dimension

Table 6: Results of Empathy Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
The school is situated in easily accessible place.	4.53	0.664	I
The school canteen has healthy food which are sanitary.	4.24	1.089	III
The period of the school is well adjusted for the students.	4.24	1.089	III
The school is situated at the safe neighborhood.	4.24	1.089	III
There is good relationship between the teachers, students and the parents.	4.31	0.753	II

According to the analysis results of empathy dimension, the highest mean score with 4.53 is “the accessible location of school for all students” while “good relationship within 3 parties such as teachers, students and parents or guardians. “The school canteen”, “the period of school” and “safe neighborhood” are the same mean scores with 4.24. Those findings mean that the participants are more satisfied on assessable location and relationship of this private school. The are basically satisfied with others three.

Responsiveness Dimension

Table 7: Results of Responsiveness Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Parents ‘complaints are answered with effective solutions.	4.63	0.673	III
The exam results are out within a short period and can be discussed effectively.	4.75	0.572	I
Correct and exact education feedback	4.71	0.653	II
The school can guide the progress in education of the students.	4.49	0.665	IV
The school can solve the problems of each and every student.	4.24	1.089	V

In accordance with the findings of above table of responsiveness dimension, the mean score of “the exam results” is 4.75 and it is the highest while “the feedback” is the second highest mean score with 4.71. The mean scores of other factors such as the effective solution upon complaints and guidance on education progress for students are 4.63 and

4.49. The lowest mean score with 4.24 is solving problems by school. According to those results, parents and guardians have highest satisfaction level on the arrangement of exam results and also have high satisfaction level on feedback of education. Therefore, they can monitor and evaluate the real condition of their children continuously. They satisfied moderately on the effective solution upon complaints and guidance on education progress for their children. However, they satisfied on overall factors of responsiveness because all mean scores are above average mean score 3.5.

Customer satisfaction

Table 8: Results of satisfaction Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
The education and progress of the students can be discussed well.	4.45	0.776	III
a right decision to choose “Kaung Sone”	4.60	0.493	II
trustworthiness for the education of the students	4.44	0.642	IV
The school teaches not only knowledge but also manner and attitude for the students.	4.68	0.47	I
“Kaung Sone” Private school will be my first choice.	4.43	0.661	V

Above table is the finding of customer satisfaction variable. Overall mean scores are above average mean score 3.5 which means the satisfaction level of all parents and guardians are above average. Among them, the highest satisfaction factor is “the knowledge, manner and attitude of schoolteachers” because the mean score is 4.68 while a right decision of all parents and guardians to choose “Kaung Sone” is the second highest with 4.60 mean score. The other factors such as “discussion about students’ education and their progress” and “trustworthiness” are 4.45 and 4.44. The lowest is the choice of selecting Kaung Sone school instead of others which has the mean score of 4.43. These findings mean the parents and guardians are truly believe upon the knowledge, manner and attitude of schoolteachers to trust for the development of their children and they also truly satisfied with their own decision.

Overall satisfaction level of five service qualities



Figure 2: Overall satisfaction level of five service qualities

In here, responsiveness is the highest satisfaction level, and the second highest satisfaction levels are reliability and assurance. Tangibility and empathy are lowest satisfaction level according to mean score. These findings mean that parents and guardians are highly satisfied with responsiveness service quality dimension in Kaung Sone Private school and they also have high satisfaction level on the factors of reliability and assurance of school. But, for tangibility and empathy dimensions, they may have high expectation when they compare with other international schools. Therefore, to answer the above question, responsiveness, reliability and assurance are the most influencing service qualities on customer satisfaction in current condition of Kaung Sone Private school.

Reliability Test

Table 9: results of reliability analysis

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Reliability	.906	5
Assurance	.847	5
Tangibility	.829	5
Empathy	.831	5
Responsiveness	.768	5
Customer satisfaction	.918	5

Table shows the results of reliability test for the data of survey questionnaires of service qualities and customer satisfaction. It can identify the internal consistency of the scales of questionnaires. The acceptable value of reliability test described with the value of Cronbach's Alpha (α) which is 0.7 or higher. As an interpretation of above table, all Cronbach's Alpha (α) are higher than 0.7 that show the data are more acceptable and internal consistency is high.

Correlation Test

Table 10: Correlation analysis with Pearson coefficient values

		Reliability	Assurance	Tangibility	empathy	responsiveness	satisfaction
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	1					
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.355**	1				
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	.840**	.540**	1			

Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.854**	.327**	.857**	1		
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	.739**	.724**	.833**	.749**	1	
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.753**	.557**	.900**	.810**	.799**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This test shows the relationship between two variables. According to above table, it shows how the service quality is related with satisfaction. In here, the measurement value is Pearson Coefficient value. The Pearson coefficient value of tangibility with satisfaction is 0.900 which means tangibility has very strong relationship with each other. For reliability, empathy and responsiveness with satisfaction, the Pearson coefficient values are 0.753, 0.810 and 0.799 which mean they have strong relationship with customer satisfaction. The relationship between assurance and satisfaction is moderate because of Pearson Coefficient value, 0.557. Therefore, to answer the above question, the findings show that if the service quality like tangibility is increased, the customer satisfaction of Kaung Sone Private school will increase very strongly. If the other three service qualities such as reliability, empathy and responsiveness are increased, the satisfaction rate will increase strongly too. But for assurance, although the service quality factors of assurance are increased, the satisfaction rate will only moderately increase in current condition.

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of the five SERVQUAL dimensions—reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness—on customer satisfaction at Kaung Sone Private School.

Model Summary

The model indicated a strong relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, with $R = 0.911$ and $R^2 = 0.83$. This suggests that 83% of the variance in customer satisfaction can be explained by the five predictors, while the remaining 17% is due to external factors.

ANOVA Test

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 67.46$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the set of predictors collectively explains customer satisfaction effectively.

Table 11: Regression Analysis

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t-value	Sig. (p)
Constant	1.354	0.237	—	5.708	0.000
Reliability	-0.060	0.076	-0.088	-0.830	0.410
Assurance	0.096	0.067	0.122	1.436	0.160
Tangibility	0.480	0.091	0.666	5.304	0.000***
Empathy	0.181	0.086	0.248	2.093	0.040**
Responsiveness	0.035	0.122	0.035	0.284	0.780

Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis Testing

Table 12: Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Result
H1: Reliability has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.	Rejected
H2: Assurance has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.	Rejected
H3: Tangibility has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.	Accepted
H4: Empathy has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.	Accepted
H5: Responsiveness has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.	Rejected

Summary of Findings

The regression results confirm that tangibility and empathy significantly and positively affect customer satisfaction, with tangibility emerging as the strongest predictor. Other dimensions reliability, assurance, and responsiveness did not show significant effects. These findings emphasize that parents at Kaung Sone Private School value visible facilities, resources, and personalized care more strongly than procedural reliability or responsiveness.

Discussion

The findings reveal that responsiveness, reliability, and assurance are important for overall satisfaction, but tangibility and empathy emerged as the most significant predictors of improvement in Kaung Sone Private School. This result differs from many regional SERVQUAL studies, where reliability and assurance usually dominate in educational settings, particularly in Southeast Asia. In Myanmar, however, parents' expectations are strongly shaped by comparisons with international schools. They place high value on physical facilities, classroom layout, and modern teaching environments, which explains why tangibility carried such weight in this study. Similarly, empathy was highlighted as parents expect more personalized engagement, emotional support, and closer relationships between teachers, staff, and families. These cultural and contextual factors show that while academic quality and strict discipline are appreciated, parents want private schools to feel both modern and human centered.

The practical implication is clear: private schools in Myanmar must not only maintain strong teaching standards but also invest in infrastructure and soft skills. Upgrading facilities, redesigning classrooms, and expanding access to learning resources would directly address tangibility gaps. At the same time, schools should provide training in communication and emotional intelligence for teachers and staff to strengthen empathy-driven service. Together, these actions can create a competitive edge in a market where parents increasingly evaluate schools by both visible facilities and interpersonal experiences.

Conclusion

This study confirms that service quality significantly influences customer satisfaction at Kaung Sone Private School, with tangibility and empathy emerging as the most critical areas for improvement. While parents value reliability, assurance, and responsiveness, their highest expectations are directed toward better facilities and closer relationships with staff and teachers. Addressing these factors will be essential for enhancing satisfaction and sustaining competitiveness in Myanmar's private education sector.

Limitations

This research focused on a single private school, limiting the generalizability of results. The sample size of 75

parents, while informative, may not fully capture the diversity of customer expectations across Myanmar. Additionally, SERVQUAL, originally developed in Western contexts, may not fully reflect cultural nuances in Myanmar, where interpersonal warmth and visible facilities often weigh more heavily than abstract measures of assurance.

Future Research

Further studies should expand to multiple private schools and include larger, more diverse samples. Mixed methods approach, such as interviews or focus groups with parents, could provide richer insights into why certain service quality dimensions matter more in this context. Comparative studies with other Southeast Asian countries would also help clarify whether the importance of tangibility and empathy is unique to Myanmar or part of a broader regional trend.

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