

# Identifying and solving some conceptual issues associated with the adoption of a generic service quality scale: the E-S-QUAL case

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Service quality has come to be recognized as a strategic tool for attaining operational efficiency and is a critical determinant of business performance. However, the conceptualization and measurement of perceived service quality has proved to be a difficult concept to grasp. It has been referred to as “elusive”, “unresolved” and “far from conclusive”. Therefore, this paper aims to identify and discuss some key conceptual and empirical issues related to the adoption of a generic scale, such as E-S-QUAL.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** A collection of 21 papers that have previously used the scale were retrieved from the leading well-known databases. A Delphi method was used and two rounds of the web survey data collection were adopted. Out of the 61 potential respondents 17 experts agreed to take part in the panel group.

**Findings:** The overall results showed that all the experts agreed on 42 points related to the conceptualization and empirical issues. Including for example the number of the dimensions instability are not only due to the service industry analyzed or the web user cultural profile but also to other factors such analysis methodology used across studies. There was consensus that the “Fulfillment” dimension is one of the prominent dimensions only referring to the websites that sell and deliver physical goods etc.

**Originality/value:** this study results increase the knowledge and the confidence that researchers and practitioners have when they use a generic scale.

**Key words:** Online Service Quality, Scale Assessment, Generic Scale, E-S-QUAL, Delphi Survey