



## Measuring Service Quality of Wooden Cricket Bats in Kashmir Valley.

**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Sanjay Sonawane, <sup>2</sup>CA. Prachi Malgaonkar**

<sup>1</sup>Professor, Department of Accountancy, PTVA's Sathaye College Mumbai-400057  
Research Guide, Sanskar Sarjan Education Society's D.T.S.S College of Commerce,  
Malad (East), Mumbai- 400 097

<sup>2</sup>Orcid id: 0009-0007-5881-0435

Assistant Professor, Department of Finance, St Francis Institute of Management and  
Research, Mumbai-  
400030

Research Scholar, Sanskar Sarjan Education Society's D.T.S.S College of Commerce,  
Malad (East), Mumbai- 400 097

### Abstract:

Kashmir Valley a beautiful scenic location has a long tradition of manufacturing wooden cricket bats. The history of cricket bats goes back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when local artisans started making bats out of the region's plentiful willow wood. Over the years this industry has grown to be one of the major drivers of the local economy, especially in the districts of Pulwama and Anantnag. The quality of services provided is crucial to retaining a competitive advantage and ensuring customer satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to measure the service quality of wooden cricket bats in Kashmir Valley. The technique used paired t-test for data analysis. The outcome of the study indicated that the seller does not deliver the cricket bats as promised and does not ensure the durability of the product. It was also seen that The seller is not prompt in addressing any concerns or queries regarding the cricket bats, the customers don't feel confident that the wooden cricket bats they buy here will meet their performance expectations also the shop do not provide a guarantee or warranty on the wooden cricket bats, ensuring their quality.

**Keywords:** *Service Quality, SERQUAL Model, Paired T-Test, Kashmir Valley, Cricket Bats.*

### Introduction:

The development and expansion of the Kashmiri cricket bat market has been fuelled by several variables. The area is home to an abundance of fine willow trees, especially the Kashmir willow, which is well-known for its adaptability and endurance. The availability of this remarkable raw material has made it possible for a booming bat-making business to flourish. Kashmiri artisans have produced some of the best cricket bats in the world by mastering their



trade over many generations and handing down age-old methods and workmanship (Wani & Jaiswal 2010). The Kashmiri cricket bat industry has a major socioeconomic influence. Many people have been given job chances as a result of it, especially skilled artists and craftspeople. The expansion of the industry has aided in the region's economic development in addition to providing stable employment. The manufacturing of bat handles, bat stickers, and bat accessories are examples of ancillary industries that have been bolstered by the success of the bat-making industry, hence increasing the total economic impact. One of the most significant industrial sectors is the wood sector (Haq UI, Bilal AD. 2010).

### **Wooden Cricket Bats Industry in Kashmir Valley**

The term "wood-based industry" refers to the use of many types of wood as raw materials, including willow, poplar, mulberry, walnut, and others. That sector of the economy handles the mechanical and chemical processing and treatment of wood. This industry produces furniture, sporting products, matches, sawn wood, and plywood. Over the past few years, Jammu & Kashmir has seen steady growth in this business. Only two of Jammu and Kashmir's twenty-two districts Anantnag and Pulwama have a majority of their population working in this industrial sector. Among the significant wood-based industries in these districts are those that make wooden furniture, turn wood, bead wood, make wooden toys, and make shoo's and cricket bats. The cricket bat industry is one of the largest wood-based enterprises (Nabi G, et al. 2012). The industry in Kashmir is thought to have originated in Sialkot, Pakistan. The technological expertise was brought over from England. Where there was a considerable supply of raw materials in Kashmir, this commerce thrived (Wani & Jaiswal 2010). In light of the aforementioned information, the current inquiry was conducted in the Kashmiri districts of Anantnag and Pulwama in 2017.

### **Service Quality**

In today's fiercely competitive business environment, service quality is the primary marketing tactic and is essential to businesses, particularly if they hope to win over customers and earn their loyalty (Namin, 2017; Omar, Fadzil Ariffin, & Ahmad, 2016). As its identification enables the marketing analyst and professional to define, measure, manage, and improve consumer-perceived service quality, ongoing study on service quality dimensions for all company settings and contexts is essential (Voon, 2017; James, Calderon, & Cook, 2017). Customers are the priority for quality. If the services fulfill the needs of the client, then they can be considered high-quality. The quality of a company's services has an impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty; if it offers high-quality goods and services, its clients will be faithful to it. to be advantageous to the relevant business. Nurma and associates (2024).



In the service sector, quality service is the culmination of several components working together. Primarily, human quality serves as the cornerstone, as demonstrated by the demeanor and disposition of those who engage with visitors. Interpersonal skills, effective communication, and the capacity to discern the needs and expectations of customers are critical components of successful quality service delivery. Additionally, obtaining service quality is greatly dependent on the abilities and knowledge of the workforce. This entails being proficient in the technical aspects and processes associated with their work responsibilities. With the help of these abilities, employees may deliver services with a high degree of professionalism, guaranteeing that every part of the service is carried out effectively and consistently. (Nurma et al. 2024).

### SERQUAL Model

In 1988, A. Parasuraman, V. Zeithaml, and L. Berry developed this model. SERVQUAL is a service quality model, as its name implies. After using 22 questions to measure service quality using five dimensions instead of the original ten, it was dubbed the RATER model. The following is a list of the five service quality dimensions:

1. Reliability:	The ability of a business to provide its services efficiently. It is an indicator of how successfully a business keeps its word.
2. Assurance:	This refers to the staff members' capacity to foster a sense of trust among clients.
3. Tangibles:	This category includes the actual buildings, furnishings, personnel, and communication networks.
4. Empathy:	This highlights how much weight the company places on the requirements and preferences of its clients.
5. Responsiveness:	This refers to the firm's capacity and readiness to assist and support clients by agreements.

### Review of Literature:

1. **Nurma, Halika., Kiran, Kharisma. (2024).** Investigated factors affecting service quality affected patron loyalty and satisfaction in a restaurant environment. The results show that customer happiness was high influenced by service elements like “tangibility, reliability, assurance, and responsiveness,” and that customer satisfaction in turn had a huge impact on the loyalty of the customers. Additionally, it was discovered that a strong correlation between client loyalty and “assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability.” The study emphasizes the relative significance of direct service variables over their indirect influence through customer pleasure.
2. **N., A., Teeli., et al. (2023)** examined the main obstacles the cricket bat industry encountered in the years 2017-2018 and compiled detailed information on the raw



material availability in the Kashmiri districts of Anantnag and Pulwama. The results demonstrated that the industry was confronted with serious problems as a result of inadequate marketing channels, as lack of high-quality raw materials, and erratic electrical supply, all of which increased production deficits. The industry generated 15.10 crore clefts in 2016 using 17,28,532ft<sup>3</sup> of wood. The 62 units that were chosen obtained an average of 9,428.33 ft<sup>3</sup> of wood per unit.

3. **Nguyễn, et al. (2023)** investigated the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality in the wooden furniture industry to improve consumer satisfaction regarding service quality. The results showed that the independent components of service quality substantially influenced customer satisfaction, with attitudes having biggest impact and “design, experience, tangibles, and technology” having the least. Furthermore, it was found that this research added to the theoretical understanding of service quality of the wood furniture sector, the study gave wooden furniture companies advice on how to improve customer happiness through improved service quality.
4. **Sonawane, S., & Malgaonkar, C. P. (2023)** to understand how the Anantnag District's cricket bat manufacturing facilities are affected by mechanization. The results showed that worries about the expenses of upgrading, the possibility of job losses for daily laborers, and the time required to adjust to new technologies caused cricket bat producers to rely mostly on old methods or semi-automation throughout production. Mechanization might improve product quality and manufacturing efficiency, according to data gathered from 126 respondents, but it would have little effect on the total number of factory labor positions. On the other hand, it was anticipated that there would be more jobs in distribution and sales. The study also showed that pooling costs and facilities among clusters could lower individual capital investment requirements and that government support and incentives for the purchase of new gear could be beneficial to cricket bat manufacturing units.
5. **Alfaris, Sururi., Dewi, Komala, Sari. (2023)** examined the impact of the loyalty of the customers in the furniture retail shop on service quality, pricing, and customer contentment. The outcome highlighted the critical role that “pricing, customer contentment, and service quality play in influencing consumer behavior by showing how much they affect customer loyalty. The research yielded significant insights for enterprises seeking to fortify consumer loyalty and augment their competitiveness within the worldwide market. It suggested that firms prioritize improving customer satisfaction, implementing reasonable pricing strategies, and upgrading service standards to foster stronger client loyalty.
6. **Ahmad, N., & Rafeeq, J. (2022)** evaluated the quality parameter of cleft wood used for cricket bat manufacturing in Kashmir, focusing willow and poplar wood. The results showed that in terms of moisture content, wood density, and fibre length, willow wood



was superior to poplar wood when it came to cricket bat quality. It was discovered that poplar-made bats were inferior to those made from willow.

7. **Surjit, Kumar, et al. (2020).** Examined how service quality functions in Indian small and medium-sized manufacturing companies' supply chains and created models showing how supply chain partners' contributions affect customer loyalty and satisfaction. Three models connecting the service quality provided by distributors, suppliers, employees, and manufacturers were found. The results of testing these models with SEM indicated they fit well, underscoring the significance of service quality in fostering stronger ties across the supply chain. For SMEs hoping to build more robust and mutually profitable partnerships with their supply chain partners, the report offers insightful information.
8. **Anish, Sachdeva., Surjit, Kumar, Gandhi. (2019)** constructed a system specifically for assessing Service quality (SQ) at different manufacturing supply chain interfaces. The results conceptualized supplier-manufacturer-employee (SQ) as a multifaceted construct that functions at these interfaces. According to the report, providing high-quality services is essential for improving "customer loyalty corporate success, cost containment, and profitability." The service-dominant paradigm, which emphasizes intangible elements like relationships and service, has not, however, been completely embraced by the manufacturing sector, despite its significance.

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To measure the service quality of wooden cricket bats in Kashmir Valley.
2. To give suggestive measures to enhance service quality of wooden cricket bats in Kashmir Valley.

### Hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: The expected and perceived mean scores do not differ significantly.

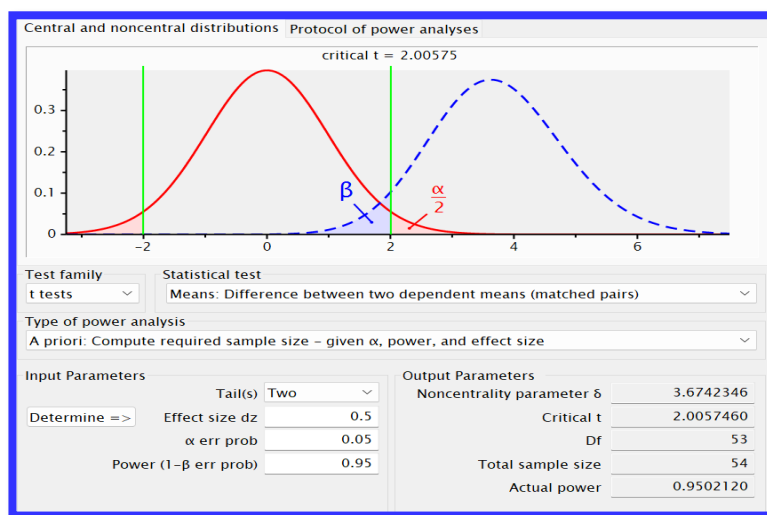
H<sub>1</sub>: The expected and perceived mean scores differ significantly.

### Research Methodology:

Table No: 1 Research Methodology	
Sample Size:	120 buyers of Kashmir wooden cricket bat
Sample Size Determination:	To apply a paired t-test with an effect size of 0.5, an alpha of 5%, and a test power of 95%, a minimum sample size of 54 was deemed necessary.



<b>Sampling Technique:</b>	Non-probability convenience sampling technique
<b>Data Collection Methods:</b>	Both primary and secondary data collection techniques were employed.
<b>Data Analysis:</b>	SPSS 26 software was utilized for the analysis. The paired t-test was employed for the statistical analysis.



### Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table No: 2 Reliability Analysis		
Construct	Expected	Perceived
Tangibles	.799	.723
Reliability	.766	.801
Responsiveness	.701	.787
Assurance	.704	.766
Empathy	.745	.734

As per the above table all the values of Cronbach's alpha > 0.7 indicating the responses are reliable.



Table No: 3 Gap Analysis- Tangibles						
Items	Expected		Actual		GAP	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(Perceived Mean Expected Mean)	
The wooden cricket bats are made from high-quality materials and have a visually appealing design.	3.2900	.88	3.5400	.98	0.25	0.000
The packaging and presentation of the cricket bats reflect a premium, well-crafted product.	3.8000	.76	4.5400	.88	0.74	0.000
The cricket bats available at the shop are neatly displayed and well-maintained, reflecting the professionalism of the seller.	2.9000	.88	3.8600	.92	0.96	0.000

Since the p-value is less than 0.05 for all items within the tangibles construct, indicating expected mean  $\neq$  to perceived mean. The gap analysis shows that customer expectations and perceptions of tangibles related to wooden cricket bats differ favourably. With statistically significant p-values (0.000), the quality of materials, packing and display for all three items shows a higher perceived mean than expected, suggesting that buyers evaluate these factors more favourable than expected. Notably, the bat display and maintenance show the biggest disparity, indicating that this area significantly surpasses customer expectations.

Table No: 4 Gap Analysis- Reliability.						
Items	Expected		Actual		GAP	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(Perceived Mean Expected Mean)	



The wooden cricket bats consistently perform well under different playing conditions.	3.8000	.88	4.4500	.78	0.65	0.000
The seller delivers the cricket bats as promised and ensures the durability of the product	4.1200	.72	3.6700	.76	<b>(0.45)</b>	0.000
Customers can depend on the bats to maintain quality performance for a reasonable duration of use	1.8900	.68	2.600	.66	0.71	0.000

Since the p-value is less than 0.05 for all items within the reliability construct, indicating the expected mean  $\neq$  to the perceived mean. The reliability gap analysis reveals diverse customer views about the performance and reliability of wooden cricket bats. Customer perceptions of the bat's continuous good performance under different settings are supported by a positive gap of (0.065, p-value 0.000). However, there is a significant negative gap of (-0.45) concerning the seller's reliability in fulfilling orders and guaranteeing the longevity of the product. Furthermore, consumers believe that the bats do not sustain high-quality performance for long enough a gap of 0.71 indicates that there is much space for development in this regard.

**Table No: 5 Gap Analysis- Responsiveness.**

Items	Expected		Actual		GAP	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(Perceived Mean Expected Mean)	
The seller is prompt in addressing any concerns or queries regarding the cricket bats	4.2000	.45	3.6900	.58	<b>(0.51)</b>	0.000
When asked for advice, the seller provides quick and helpful suggestions on selecting the right bat	1.8900	.67	2.7800	.64	0.89	0.000



If any issues arise with the bat, the seller offers timely solutions, such as replacements or repairs.	3.8900	.77	4.8000	.54	0.91		0.000
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Since the p-value is less than 0.05 for all items within the reliability construct, indicating the expected mean  $\neq$  to the perceived mean. The responsiveness gap analysis indicates that there are several important areas where consumer expectations are not being fulfilled. Consumers felt that the supplier was not responding to their concerns quickly enough, as indicated by the negative gap of (-0.51). in contrast, buyers who sought assistance from the vendors reported a favorable gap of 0.89, meaning they considered the recommendations to be timely and helpful. Additionally, the seller’s capacity to promptly resolve problems is seen favourably, with a positive gap of 0.91, indicating efficient service in this area. While offering advice and responses has its advantages, there is room for considerable improvement in terms of how quickly issues are resolved.

Table No: 6 Gap Analysis- Assurance

Items	Expected		Actual		GAP	P-Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	(Perceived Mean Expected Mean)	
The seller is knowledgeable about the different types of wood used for the cricket bats and their performance	3.4500	.78	4.5600	.65	1.11	0.000
I feel confident that the wooden cricket bats I buy here will meet my performance expectations	4.8900	.66	3.6500	.60	(1.24)	0.000
The shop provides a guarantee or warranty on the wooden cricket bats, ensuring their quality	3.8900	.81	2.7650	.83	(1.125)	0.000



Since the p-value is less than 0.05 for all items within the assurance construct, indicating expected mean  $\neq$  to perceived mean. The assurance gap analysis reveal significant disparities between the expectations of customers and their judgements of the seller's competence and reliability. A significant favourable gap of 1.11 indicates that customers believe the vendor is well educated about the different varieties of wood and how well they work. However, there is a noticeable lack of faith in the wooden cricket bats' ability to perform up to expectations, as evidenced by the negative gap of (-1.24), which represents discontent and mistrust for the product's quality. In a similar vein, a negative gap of (-1.125) results from the lack of a guarantee or warranty, highlighting customers' worries regarding product assurance. The perception of knowledge is generally positive, but there are significant issues with trust and assurance that need to be addressed.

Table No: 7 Gap Analysis- Empathy

Items	Expected		Actual		GAP (Perceived Mean Expected Mean)	p- Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
The seller takes the time to understand my specific requirements for selecting the right cricket bat.	2.4900	.89	3.2400	.87	.75	0.000
I feel that the seller genuinely cares about helping me find a cricket bat that fits my playing style.	3.8500	.77	4.7600	.76	0.91	0.000
The seller offers personalized recommendations based on my needs and preferences	1.6500	.70	2.7660	.67	1.116	0.000

Since the p-value is less than 0.05 for all items within the empathy construct, indicating expected mean  $\neq$  to the perceived mean. The empathy gap analysis reveals that the seller's knowledge and attention to the customers' needs are positively perceived. Positive gap of 0.75 indicated that customers think the seller takes the time to understand their needs. Furthermore, there is a significant customer satisfaction in this area, as evidenced by the positive gap on 0.091, which indicates that buyers believe the seller actually cares about helping them discover



an appropriate cricket bat. In addition, there is a notable positive gap of 1.116 for customised recommendations based on individual tastes, indicating that clients value this kind of assistance. Overall, the findings show that the seller may effectively and sympathetically communicate with customers, which enhances the customer experience.

### **Conclusion:**

The results highlight a notable shortcoming in the service quality provided by the wooden cricket bats industry in Kashmir Valley, urging a strong base for immediate changes to both customer service and product stands. According to the research vendors frequently fall short of customers' expectations when it comes to the quality and longevity of cricket bats, which hurts consumer confidence. Potential buyers are also discouraged from interacting with the local market as a result of the seller's inability to promptly respond to their questions and concerns. Moreover, these problems are made worse by the wooden cricket bats' lack of warranties or guarantees, which makes buyers doubt the quality of their products. Sellers must improve the quality of their services and product guarantees, as this example highlights. Sellers can greatly customer contentment and trust by implementing more transparent communication processes, guaranteeing product reliability, and providing guarantees. Ultimately, fixing these shortcomings in service quality is crucial for building a lasting market for wooden cricket bats in the Kashmir Valley, where devoted customers can be developed through enhanced customer care and dependable products.

### **Suggestions:**

- Provide quality control procedures to guarantee that, before sale, all wooden cricket bats fulfill specified performance and durability requirements.
- Give employees thorough training on good customer service techniques, emphasizing timely answers to questions and successful resolution of customer complaints
- Warranties and guarantees should be provided to reassure buyers about the product's quality and durability, encouraging them to buy with more confidence and trust.
- Establish ways for consumers to express their opinions or give their feedback on the goods and services they have received so that vendors can point out areas that are in dire need of development.
- All information regarding the maintenance, features, and care instructions of the product should be provided openly and transparently so that the customers are aware of it and make informed decisions and judgments while taking care of their product.
- Marketing plans should to drawn is such a way that they draw the attention of the buyers to the advantages and the characteristics of wooden cricket bats whilst also highlighting enhancements developed in response to the input provided by the customer.



- The manufacturers should actively participate in local cricket events and sponsor community tournaments to build brand visibility and strengthen their relationships with future customers, showcasing the quality of the wooden cricket bats directly to the target audience.
- Social media platforms should be utilized to engage with customers, share testimonials and showcase the product quality through videos and interactive content.

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