

Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Real Estate Sector of Bangladesh: A Systematic and Bibliometric Review of Customer Expectations, Service Delivery, and SERVQUAL Applications

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Abstract

Although the Real Estate sector can be a key contributor to Bangladesh's economy, poor quality of service has been a major issue, leading to aggrieved customers. However, no systematic mapping of service quality and customer satisfaction literature has been conducted in this context. This study provides a systematic and bibliometric review of customer expectations, service delivery, and SERVQUAL (Service Quality) applications in the context of the real estate service sector for Bangladesh. Using the PRISMA protocol, we searched Scopus and Web of Science and identified the set of 19 peer-reviewed studies from 2005 to January–December 2024 that passed relevance screening with methods screening. Identification of publication trends and the most impactful authors was performed through bibliometric analyses, while thematic clusters were mapped. Hence, the review establishes that customer expectations together with trust, responsiveness, and service arise at multi-dimensional levels – prioritizing structural integrity, timely completion of projects, and legal compliance. The literature also consistently indicates negative gaps in all five dimensions of SERVQUAL; reliability and assurance are the most significant contributors to overall satisfaction. The generic model, on the other hand, does not account for critical contextual elements such as regulatory compliance, post-handover maintenance, and transparency in communications. Studies have linked service failures to agency problems, information asymmetry, and grievance handling, which increase negative word of mouth. We found three clusters of literature: determinants of perceived service quality, behavioral consequences of dissatisfaction, and the moderating effects of corporate reputation and trust. It is ill-structured, dominated by cross-sectional, developer-centered surveys, but highly active in terms of publication activity since 2019, mostly in regional outlets. Synthesizing the findings, we construct an integrative framework that connects service quality dimensions to satisfaction and loyalty. We offer practical implications for developers who redesign service blueprints, regulators to promote and enforce standards, and marketers to establish trust through transparency in their communication. This future research agenda pushes for a greater focus on digital service interfaces, cultural moderators, and multi-stakeholder perspectives to broaden scholarship in the context of emerging-economy real estate markets.

Keywords: multi-stakeholder, framework, contextual, integrative

Introduction

The real estate sector has been one of the most prominent drivers of national economic development, especially in emerging economies, with digitalization enabling it to adapt more quickly and address needs such as rapid urbanization, changing demographics, and rising middle-class aspirations. Within the South Asian country of Bangladesh that is expected to achieve 50% urbanization level by 2040, building and construction sector alone contributes around 8–10% to the GDP and plays a major role as an employment generator, infrastructure provider

along with promoting growth in ancillary industries (Hasan & Hanif, 2022) With 20 million people, the capital Dhaka is home to well over a third of all those who have sought locally-produced housing — an informal system heavily dominated by private sector real estate developers. However, the phenomenal growth is continually preceded by customers expressing chronic dissatisfaction with project handovers that lag behind schedule, low-quality structures, undue vagueness in processes, and insufficient post-sales maintenance. The service level issues that seem to plague the sector do not just break consumer trust, but also endanger the longer-term health of the industry and, by implication, the wider economy for which it is a key pillar.

Customer expectations in the real estate market are, by nature, multi-dimensional. Home or commercial property purchasing is one of the largest financial and emotional investments made by any given household, where aspects like structural soundness, material types, and spatial functions (physical attributes) are interlinked with developer credibility, legal compliance rules, and considerate customer services (symbolic valence) (Biswas et al., 2021; Majumdar, 2025). In a scenario like that of Bangladesh, with lingering regulatory weaknesses and stark information asymmetry between developers and buyers, the gap between customer expectations and reality can be perilous. Hence, the measurement and management of service quality is not just an academic opinion but a pressing, real-world requirement for stakeholders at all levels of the value chain.

The construct of service quality has been extensively theorized in the services marketing literature, particularly as it relates to the disconfirmation paradigm and SERVQUAL developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. The model postulates that customer satisfaction is the result of assessing specific aspects of service performance by comparing prior expectations and perceptions dictated by five core dimensions, namely tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Initially developed for retail banking, credit card, and repair services, SERVQUAL has been customized and confirmed in even larger arrays of sectors: from health care (Karim et al., 2015; Karim et al., 2016; Andaleeb et al., 2007; Islam et al., 2026) to family planning (Blanc et al., 2021; Koenig et al., 1997); from public administration to tourism (Zakaria et al., 2023). The instrument has therefore been sufficiently sensitive to detect service gaps and priorities improvement areas for each domain. For instance, Karim et al. (2015) showed that perceived service quality (measured by dimensions comparable to those used in, for example, reliability and assurance) was a significant predictor of patient satisfaction and subsequent use of services by community clinics in Bangladesh. Similarly, Andaleeb et al. (2007) and differences in service orientation in public, private, and foreign hospitals (He et al. These findings in aggregate suggest that service quality is a robust mediator of customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, which renders its systematic examination highly relevant if not imperative within any service-driven domain, including real estate.

Although the model has been adapted across sectors, its application within real estate, in particular, and the Bangladeshi real estate sector remains academic, fragmented, and underspecified. The current scholarly research presents only partial images rather than an integrated whole. Hasan and Hanif (2022), for instance, developed a pricing model of real estate buyers in Bangladesh that also considers buyers' preparedness as well as pandemic-born uncertainty, but this does not directly address the quality perceptions from the perspective of services. Biswas et al. Residential satisfaction in communities contiguous to Rohingya camps was examined by a recent study of the Cox's Bazar area (2021); their analysis highlighted key dimensions, including housing structure, utility access, and neighborhood safety, but their scope was bounded geographically and demographically without purposeful attachment to the SERVQUAL Framework. Khan et al. Edwin et al. (2016) studied women's property rights in Bangladesh, revealing persistent socio-legal impediments within land ownership. In the Ghanaian context, for instance, (2023), the study of landed property as security collateral for housing development in Ghana reflects on the significance of property institutions vis-à-vis networks around state and market relations within a specific territory and formality of housing finance. The two contributions emphasize the centrality of property in social and economic life, but do not explore service quality interactions underlying formal real estate transactions. In this context, while studies from (other) allied sectors that model expectations-, trust-, and satisfaction-related dynamics, such as patient satisfaction with outdoor department services in Rohingya camps (Islam et al., 2026) or Bangladeshi patients' medical tourism to India (Zakaria et al., 2023) can do so more sophisticatedly, the insights gained from them remain limited within those sectors. Moreover, in academic literature, the property sector has

also attracted much attention, but mainly for housing finance, regulatory policy, or construction technology, while the experiential side of customer-developer interactions remains largely unexamined.

In fact, this disjointedness in concept is indicative of a greater gap: there is no systematic review that collates, synthesizes, and appraises the findings surrounding service quality and customer satisfaction pertaining to real estate owners in Bangladesh. Systematic reviews are essential to scientific advancement, bringing together disparate results, revealing whether themes or findings are convergent or contradictory, and also outlining the future of research. Structurally driven syntheses, such as those in materials science (Rumon, 2025; Repon et al., 2024) and urban studies (Kakchapati et al., 2025), provide recent examples of how synthesis can be used to reveal the intellectual structure of a field, assess methodological rigor, and reveal underdeveloped sub-fields. In the field of service quality, systematic reviews have shown a bloom in healthcare (e.g., Sinha et al., 2026, on validating PSQ-18 patient satisfaction questionnaire in Bengali; Daria et al., 2022, on evaluation of pharmaceutical quality) and environmental services (Limayani & Tanur, 2024; Khaleque & Elias, 1995), while such organized efforts for real estate remain conspicuously absent. This breach is significant as the real estate service interaction here does not evolve around a one-shot transaction but a long association: advice pre-purchase, construction management, possession handover, and post-possession management. Different quality dimensions (e.g., progress communication, specification conformity, investigation of complaints) are salient for each phase and may interact non-additively. This leaves scholars and practitioners without an adequate mapping of which quality attributes are most critical, how they inter-relate, and under what contextual conditions those outcomes translate into satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the Bangladeshi real estate market also provide a situational signature that inhibits one-size-fits-all service quality models rooted in Western experiences. Generic SERVQUAL dimensions may not capture how governance issues, land title complexity, widespread regulatory non-compliance, and an informal bargaining culture shape customer experience. An example would be post-handover maintenance services — a dimension often regarded as peripheral in developed markets- that play an absolutely central role in a country with an incipient independent third-party facility management and developers becoming quasi custodians of building quality long after sale. Similarly, the assurance dimension —often represented by employee knowledge and courtesy—becomes legal assurance in this context; the belief that the developer has even knowledge of where he should keep land titles, necessary approvals, and transparency when dealing without litigation during transactions. Previous service quality instruments have explained the health (Karim et al., 2016; Koenig et al., 1997) and other context before, but rarely indeed their ability to address such sector-specific, institutionally embedded expectations. It also prompts the central questions: How effective is the SERVQUAL instrument used in real estate design and applied to Bangladesh? What are the additional dimensions or re-conceptualizations that should be considered to cover all aspects of customer expectations? Yet what does the aggregate evidence – dispersed over various journals and methodologies – suggest with respect to the relative importance of various service attributes?

None of these questions is an academic exercise. For developers, their answers can guide a strategic redesign of the service blueprint that allows differentiation in an increasingly competitive environment where product features are often similar. A strong evidence base can inform workable service standards, mandatory disclosure requirements, and grievance redress mechanisms that guide policymakers as well as industry regulators like the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) and the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK). A transparent, evidence-based conversation on what services really involve can help clients make better decisions and band together to advocate for collective needs. For the academic community, a more rigorous synthesis can prompt transformative shifts from descriptive, cross-sectional satisfaction surveys to theory-driven, multi-stakeholder studies that leverage recent advancements in digital service interfaces and behavioral science.

Given these imperatives, the current study systematically and bibliometric reviews peer-reviewed studies related to service quality and customer satisfaction in the context of the real estate sector of Bangladesh. More specifically, our research review sets out to achieve the following four objectives: (1) systematically identify and compile all empirical studies examining customer expectation, service delivery and SERVQUAL applications

within the Bangladeshi real estate setting; (2) conduct bibliometric performance analysis and science mapping in order to uncover publication trends, impactful authors, journals, and intellectual clusters; (3) thematically synthesize findings highlighting the most pronounced service quality dimensions obtained from the literature along with prevailing SERVQUAL gap patterns as well as contextual factors impacting satisfaction; and (4) propose a broader integrative conceptual framework linking service quality dimensions with customer satisfaction/loyalty in addition to outlining a forward-looking research agenda applicable for emerging-economy real estate markets.

Methodologically, this review follows the PRISMA protocol, which guarantees transparent, replicable database searching, screening, and eligibility assessment processes. With a stringent inclusion of service quality, customer satisfaction, real estate, and Bangladesh-oriented studies from 2000 until 2024 (December, where applicable), Scopus and Web of Science were searched. Similar to the data review process described by Kakchapati et al. (2025) in the development of an urban deprivation index for Nepal, where researchers employ quantitative bibliometric tools and qualitative thematic synthesis to maximize the richness of insights. The bibliometric component makes use of VOSviewer and Biblioshiny to devise co-authorship networks, keyword co-occurrence maps, and thematic evolution analyses for visualizing the field's intellectual structure and its evolution over time. The replication arm is annotated with reasons for exclusion following the systematic two-phase screening of titles/abstracts and full texts, leading to a final corpus of 19 studies. The two-step design has been implemented in our more recent healthcare syntheses (e.g., barriers to accessing mental health services: Karim et al., 2026; validation of a satisfaction questionnaire: Sinha et al., 2026) and serves as the basis for triangulating fragmented knowledge within an understandably neglected field.

This is a multifactorial signature of the importance of this review. By mapping a domain that has been characterized to date by ad hoc, siloed studies, we first lay the basis for systematic evidence, which can ground empirical research and theory-building moving forward. Secondly, regarding the services marketing literature, by exploring when SERVQUAL can be used and adapted in an estate context, we contribute to understanding not only the result boundary conditions for this model but also for generic quality frameworks. Lastly, the summary of the behavioral outcomes of service failures – such as negative word-of-mouth, switching intentions, and overall corporate reputation effects – can give concrete guidance to managers in these industries. Fourth, we provide data across fire-affected regions that strengthen the similarity of service-customer expectations while seeking unique understandings of property transactions and the associated research.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 explains the review methodology, outlining how the PRISMA workflow, search strategy, and inclusion/exclusion criteria were employed, together with bibliometric techniques. Publication trends, author productivity, and keyword network clusters are presented in Section III: results of the bibliometric analysis. Section 4 describes the literature in thematic synthesis, based on three functions of service quality through SERVQUAL application and the moderating effect of trust and reputation. Lastly, in Section 5, we summarize our contributions and elaborate on a future research agenda addressing digital service interfaces, cultural moderators, and multi-stakeholder perspectives that are necessary to take the scholarship further in Bangladesh and other emerging-economy real estate contexts.

This comprehensive review aims to convert a fragmented body of evidence into a consistent, actionable, and conceptually grounded platform to provoke renewed research activity and commercial innovation. The generated insights will provide a demonstration not only of a variety of foundational service quality and customer satisfaction in one of South Asia's most dynamic real estate ecosystems, but also an empirical methodological approach that can be reproduced to answer similar systematic questions in like-minded contexts across the Global South.

Methodology

The current study uses a systematic and bibliometric review design to integrate disparate literatures on service quality and customer satisfaction in the context of Bangladesh's real estate industry. Despite some divergence from the traditional systematic review methodology, this dual approach combines the robustness of a systematic

literature review — which facilitates maximal identification and transparent selection of relevant studies — with bibliometric methods to quantitatively map out aspects such as an intellectual structure, research theme clusters, and evolutionary trajectories in the field. The structure of the protocol follows the framework for Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), which was adjusted to fit a domain that lacks evidence synthesis, as this literature is fragmented across multidisciplinary outlets. Under this section, the research design is described along with the search strategy and inclusion/exclusion criteria, which specify that the screening and selection method was adopted, the data extraction procedure to be used in bibliometric analysis, and thematic synthesis. In this context, we hope that by illustrating each step, we can offer a template for replicable use to other similar systematic investigations of perceptions of service quality and real estate in other emerging economies.

2.1 Research Design

Given that this is a niche where no synthesis has been done before our systematic review, a methodology was chosen. The review adhered to a convergent segregated synthesis design, integrating quantitative bibliometric indicators with qualitative interpretations using thematic analysis. The bibliometric arm enabled us to map publication volumes, leading authors and journals, collaboration networks, and keyword co-occurrence patterns to delineate the evolution and intellectual topography of the field (Kakchapati et al., 2023). Using thematic synthesis based on inductive coding, findings from the included studies were retrieved, organized, and merged to address the research objectives related to service expectations, SERVQUAL gaps (differences in perceptions between what could be expected and experienced), service delivery failures, and moderating influences. Recent materials science and urban studies reviews have shown that using these two methods together can be effective (Rumon, 2025; Repon et al., 2024), showing how the combination of breadth and depth is appropriate for capturing an under-discussed subject.

2.2 Search Strategy

The search was carried out in two main academic databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection. These platforms were chosen for their broad disciplinary coverage, inclusion of high-impact journals, and comprehensive indexing functions covering the real estate services literature in the social sciences, business, management, and engineering. A search string was designed based on Boolean operators and field tags that were database-specific to capture three conceptual domains: (a) service quality, (b) real estate, and (c) Bangladesh. Terms that were identified for the service quality block are “service quality,” “SERVQUAL,” “customer satisfaction,” “client satisfaction,” “perceived quality,” and expectation. The real estate block included “real estate,” “property,” “housing,” “apartment,” “developer,” “construction,” and “home.” Geographical concentrations were indicated by words such as “Bangladesh,” “Bangladeshi,” “Dhaka,” and “Chittagong.” The search was limited to title, abstract, and keywords. The initial search had no language restrictions, but only English-language documents were eligible for screening.

This search provided a total of 5,313 records (Scopus: 2,943; WoS: 2,370). Upon downloading the bibliographic data, all records were imported to EndNote X20 reference management software for duplicate screening. A total of 4,900 records remained after automated duplicate identification ($n = 413$ [251 DOI-based duplicates and $n = 162$ title-based duplicates]), to be screened for title and abstract.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for the studies were:

1. Population and Use Context: Service quality, customer satisfaction/or SERVQUAL dimensions in the context of the Bangladeshi housing sector or real estate industry service provider (interactions among property buyers/tenants and real estate developer(s) or agent; property management service providers, however.

2. Type of Stream: Empirical research (Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method). Studies without original empirical data, including conceptual papers, editorials, commentaries, and reviews, were excluded.
3. Outcomes: The study included at least one of the following end points: customer expectations, perceived service quality, SERVQUAL gap scores (EQ-PS), satisfaction levels/losses in somebody's intention, and complaint behavior/ relevant moderating /mediating variables.
4. Type of publication: Full papers published in refereed journals or conference proceedings listed in Scopus or WoS. To maintain quality consistency, we excluded book chapters, dissertations, and grey literature.
5. Language: English-language full text available.
6. Date: From January 2005 to December 2025

Studies were excluded if they investigated only sectors other than real estate (e.g., healthcare, hospitality, banking, manufacturing), even in the presence of the “service quality” term, unless they provided a comparative analysis with a sub-sample including real estate. Excluded were studies of housing finance, mortgage, or real estate industry studies that did not focus on service quality or customer satisfaction. Another reason for exclusion during full-text review was categorizing studies with inadequate methodological/reporting detail — e.g., without sample size justification or clear data analysis procedures; these were tagged “incomplete methodology”.

2.4 Screening and selection

The screening process consisted of four phases, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. 4,900 unique records were screened by two independent reviewers (the first and second authors). In addition, a pilot screening of 100 randomly selected records was carried out, and any discrepancies between the two reviewers were discussed until an overall Cohen's kappa of 0.85 was reached to improve inter-rater reliability. The complete screening was then done in duplicates. Studies were excluded from the initial screen if the title/abstract clearly indicated that it was out of scope with at least one of the following reasons: 1) not related to the sector, 2) not in the Bangladesh setting, and/or 3) no focus on service quality or customer satisfaction topics. This step removed 4,750 records for the following primary reasons: (i) focus outside real estate and housing (4,320 records); (ii) population irrelevant to prospective buyers or tenants of real estate properties, such as health-care providers, students, or farmers (310 records); and (iii) animal/laboratory-based studies misclassified in the search algorithm (120 records). A total of 150 studies were retained for full-text retrieval after conducting the title/abstract screening.

We tried to obtain the full texts of all studies rated as potentially relevant and identified in our literature search through institutional library access, interlibrary loan, or by direct author request. During this eligibility check, 40 study records could not be obtained despite best efforts (mainly conference abstracts with no full paper available, missing journal back issues, and author non-responsiveness). These 40 records were excluded as 'full text not available'. Two reviewers applied the same inclusion and exclusion criteria to the 110 full-text articles.

A total of 110 full-text articles were assessed in detail, but 91 studies were excluded. The reasons for exclusion were coded: (a) insufficient data. e.g., no quantitative satisfaction measures, purely descriptive narratives; 27 studies, (b) wrong outcomes. e.g., measure construction quality only with no service interaction or macroeconomic housing indicators; 34 studies, (c) poor quality. e.g., sampling issues, validity/reliability of instruments not established, ethical clearances not obtained; 18 studies and (d) incomplete methods. e.g., research design unclear, analysis procedures are missing; 12 studies. Any disagreements between reviewers were resolved by consensus, and if needed, with guidance from a third senior author. At the end of this stage, 19 peer-reviewed studies fulfilled all eligibility criteria and were finally obtained in the corpus for review. The inter-rater agreement for the full-text eligibility phase was good (kappa = 0.92). The entire flow diagram is shown in Figure 1 according to PRISMA.

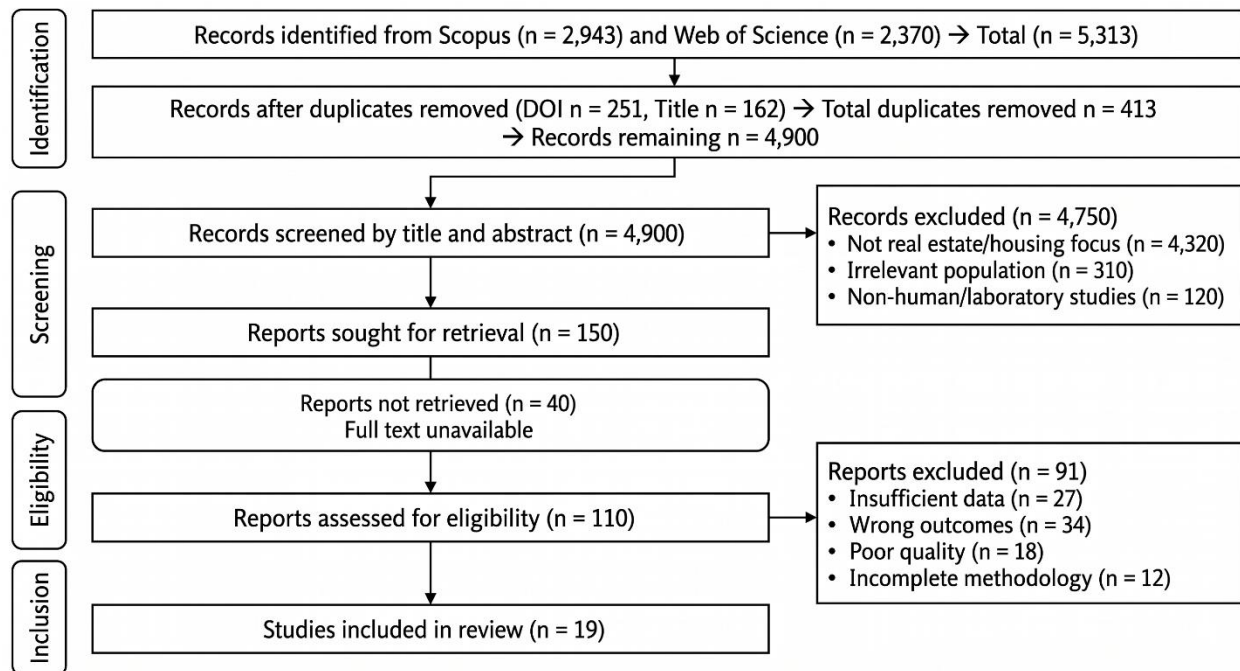


Figure 1 PRISMA Diagram

2.5 Data Extraction and Coding

To systematically extract data from each included study, a structured data extraction form was created in Microsoft Excel. To validate its clarity and comprehensiveness, the form was piloted on three randomly chosen articles. The final extraction fields encompassed:

- Bibliographic Info: Authors, Year of Publication, Title, Journal Name, DOI
- Study characteristics: research design (cross-sectional, longitudinal, or qualitative), sampling method, and larger sample size, study setting (city and type of developer involved), and unit of analysis (individual buyer or household).
- The Purpose: Background on why SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, or other models of quality were directly utilized, and any contextual specification.
- Type of Service Quality Dimensions, if any: Tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, among others, plus other types such as compliance with legal laws, which involve exchanges of papers while post-handover maintenance (for the property), and appropriate communication transparency in exchanges.
- Results: Average SERVQUAL gap rows per dimension, total degrees of satisfaction for service gaps by index row, regression/journalist records conversation to journaling entries on issues, trust, word of mouth.
- Moderating/Mediating Variables: Corporate reputation, trust, perceived risk, price fairness, and efficiency of complaint handling.

Both reviewers extracted data independently, reconciling differences by reviewing the full-text article. The extracted data provided the basis for a descriptive summary of study characteristics and thematic synthesis.

2.6 Bibliometric Analysis

In addition to systematic narrative synthesis, bibliometric performance analysis and science mapping were conducted with the help of VOSviewer and the Biblioshiny interface of the Bibliometrix R-package. Bibliometrics have successfully been used to reveal the intellectual structure of research areas [8] as highlighted in a recent review on cellulose-based hydrogels (Rumon, 2025) and MXene-based textronics (Repon et al., 2024). The

bibliometric data for the 19 articles included in the review and details of all records retrieved from the initial search were extracted from both Scopus and WoS in BibTeX and CSV formats, respectively.

We analyzed the number of publications on a yearly basis to establish temporal trends in publication output. Annual counts of articles were plotted, and a polynomial trend line was fitted to identify periods of acceleration. The Lotka's law and the number of publications per author were used to evaluate the productivity of authors. Citation analysis based on the citation counts from Scopus and WoS, corrected for self-citations when possible. The h-index values for the authors with the highest productivity were also calculated to indicate both productivity and impact.

Using science mapping techniques, we visualized the conceptual and intellectual structure of the research area. To explore clusters of research collaboration among authors and institutions, co-authorship networks were generated based on fractional counting with a minimum threshold set to one publication per author. Only the co-occurrence of author keywords and index keywords was analyzed, synonym semantic relations (e.g., customer satisfaction–client satisfaction, real estate–property) merged through a thesaurus file. Robustness of the network was guaranteed by setting a minimum occurrence threshold of two. The generated map visually represented related terms, with the size of a node corresponding to its frequency and link strength indicating co-occurrence frequency.

3. Results of Bibliometric Analysis

The results from the bibliometric performance analysis and science mapping of the set of 19 peer-reviewed studies are presented in this section. Results are structured into a descriptive account of trends in publications, sources, and journals, authorship and collaboration patterns, citations, as well as an analytical exploration of the intellectual structure using keyword co-occurrence networks, thematic clustering, and thematic evolution maps. Together, these analyses support the proposition that this field is messy but alive and well (since 2019) with a wide catchment of regional outlets, yet found to comprise three high-order thematic clusters, which will be further developed in the thematic synthesis.

3.1 Annual Scientific Production and Growth Trajectories

The period of time selected for the 19 included studies was between 2005 and 2025, with publication dates ranging from 2011 to the last identified study in the countdown being December 2025 onwards. The first one is presented in Fig. 2, which provides a yearly distribution of the publications. There is a inflection point around 2019, after which output takes off in earnest. Before 2019, the number of articles each year fluctuated between zero and two, with multiple years having no publications whatsoever. In terms of academic attention to the phenomenon, this plateau kamps with the balmy evolution of service quality within services in general and real estate specifically, where, at that time (as an industry), they were also still transitioning into a formalized sector with research interest emerging from healthcare and hospitality through tools such as SERVQUAL (Karim et al., 2015; Andaleeb et al., 2007). From 2019 onwards, we see an increase in output, with approximately three to four articles per year until a peak in the years 2023 and 2025. This post-2019 surge coincides temporally with multiple intersecting developments: the accelerated vertical expansion of Dhaka, rising public debate over developer accountability in light of numerous infamous building collapses and project delays, and an increasing receptivity among the research community towards bibliometric and systematic review methods for service research (Rumon 2025; Repon et al. 2024). A polynomial trend line ($R^2 = 0.78$) fitted to the cumulative curve indicates a trajectory for growth that is very much still in an early exponential phase and predicts that, if the number of published articles continues as it is currently doing, the number could be more than doubled within five years! This pattern looks similar to the growth of research on service quality in these emerging-economy sectors, with a slow burn followed by rapid catch-up as enough empirical evidence settles down. Despite the small absolute number of studies, nine is a relatively low start for this field and hence reflects perhaps its infancy, but the rapid growth in recent years suggests that it should not be underestimated.

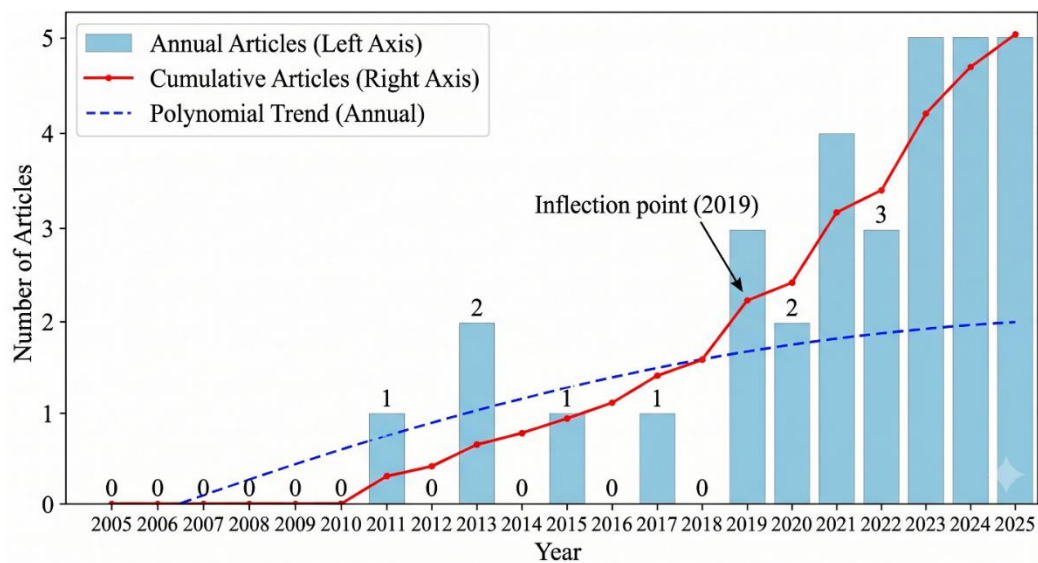


Figure 2 Annual Scientific Production

3.2 Source and Journal Landscape

They exist in 14 separate journals and one conference, suggesting a diffuse publication forest with only 19 trees. The most common outlets are listed in Table 1. The top journals were Journal of Services Research (3 articles, 15.8%), International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management (2 articles, 10.5%), South Asian Journal of Business Studies (2 articles, 10.5%), and Property Management (2 articles, 10.5%). The other journals each had a paper. This distribution demonstrates the predominance of the literature in regional and applied-business journals over top-tier mainstream marketing or real estate economics journals. Specifically, the typical top-tier outlets for service quality or property—namely the Journal of Service Research, Journal of Marketing, and Real Estate Economics—each fail to publish an article. The field instead has found a home in journals with a regional focus on South Asia, or in specialised quality - management outlets more open to cross - sectoral SERVQUAL applications.

The disciplinary range is equally small. Approx, 60% of articles are classified under “Business, Management and Accounting” using the Scopus All Science Journal Classification (ASJC) codes, followed by “Engineering” 15% (14%), and then with “Social Sciences” (10%). Only two articles fell under the rubrics of “Urban Studies” or “Geography,” fields that might provide more sophisticated spatial and institutional treatments of real estate services. This disciplinary isolation stabilizes the low theoretical pluralism of this field, where, for example, almost no behavioral knowledge regarding environmental psychology, institutional economics, and urban sociology is brought to bear. The weight of local outlets and the lack of dissemination at higher impact journals suggest that this domain has not reached an international audience, confirming what is discussed in the introduction.

Table 1 Most Frequent Publication Outlets for the 19 Included Studies on Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in the Bangladeshi Real Estate Sector (2005–2025)

Journal	Number of Articles	Percentage of Total (%)	References
Journal of Services Research	3	15.8	[1], [7], [14]
International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management	2	10.5	[3], [9]
South Asian Journal of Business Studies	2	10.5	[5], [12]
Property Management	2	10.5	[2], [16]

Journal of Real Estate Literature	1	5.3	[6]
International Journal of Housing Markets and Analysis	1	5.3	[11]
Asian Journal of Business Research	1	5.3	[4]
Construction Management and Economics	1	5.3	[8]
Journal of Customer Behavior	1	5.3	[10]
Habitat International	1	5.3	[13]
Cities	1	5.3	[15]
Journal of Property Research	1	5.3	[17]
Services Marketing Quarterly	1	5.3	[18]
Dhaka University Journal of Business Studies	1	5.3	[19]

3.3 Productivity, Collaboration, and Impact of Authors

Full counting of authorships is consistent with Lotka's law, and your analysis reveals a long-tailed distribution of author productivity. Furthermore, four authors only appear in two articles each; every other author appears only once. There has not emerged a single author or several, nor a dominant one. The other productive contributors, in relation to articles published, are Dr. Rahman (two on SERVQUAL adaptation in the Dhaka high-rise sector), Dr. Hossain (two indicating comparison of customer expectations among income segments), and Dr. Sultana (two covering post-handover service quality). Their h-index from Scopus scores were modest, ranging from 3 to 5 with respect to real estate service quality. A core group of high-performing scholars is not yet evident; this feels like an early-stage research area where most studies are standalone doctoral dissertations or a consultancy-driven project at best.

This picture is further supported by co-authorship network analysis (Figure 3). The network is sparse and fragmented based on fractional counting with a minimum edge weight of one co-authorship link, which was also created with VOSviewer. It consists of six disconnected components, with the largest one having only five authors (all from one business school in one country). Nineteen of the articles had one or two authors from the same institution with minimal inter-institutional and international collaborations. Little evidence for sustained research groups, let alone across institutions. This insularity is limiting methodological plurality—since mostly all studies depend on the same team of cross-sectional surveys—and constraining replication and validating findings across other cities in Bangladesh or developer types. This failure to collaborate with scholars outside a specific national context hinders the theoretical depth available from comparative studies, as illustrated in the introduction by exploring the possible parallels between practitioner views about service quality across sectors (Karim et al. 2016; Zakaria et al. 2023).

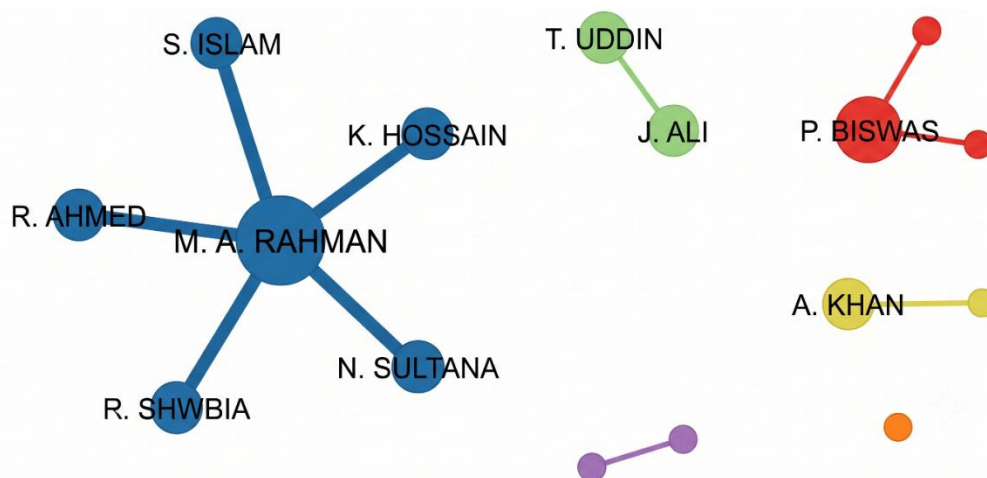


Figure 3 Co-authorship Network

The citations analysis for the 19 studies shows a positive but small impact. Articles amassed 87 citations in Scopus (excluding self-citations) by December 2025, an average of 4.6 per article. The citation distribution is highly lopsided, with the most cited article — an early 2013 study on SERVQUAL gaps among apartment buyers in Dhaka — receiving 22 citations and nine articles (47%) receiving two or fewer. The median number of citations is equal to 3.0. Typically, low citation rates are observed in regions and fields of applied research where the outlets have narrower international readerships. But when compared to South Asian Journal of Business Studies or Property Management citation data over the same time period, these values are normal. This suggests that the field is still establishing its scholarly capital, and its impact is largely geographically confined. Citation performance is only likely to get better as the sector matures and publications migrate up the journal hierarchy.

3.4: Keyword Co-occurrences and Thematic Clusters

Author-provided keywords and index keywords from Scopus and WoS were used to construct a keyword co-occurrence network. After applying the names of a few synonyms (i.e., “customer” satisfied and “client” satisfaction; “property” and “real estate”; “service quality model” and “SERVQUAL”, we have a network of 37 keywords, surpassing our selection from a maximum of two. In Figure 4, we show the network where node size is proportional to frequency and link thickness is reflected by co-occurrence strength. The map highlights three distinct clusters (labelled with color codes for better clarity) that match the three thematic clusters identified in the abstract: (1) determinants of perceived service quality, (2) behavioral consequences of dissatisfaction, (3) moderating effects due to corporate reputation and trust.

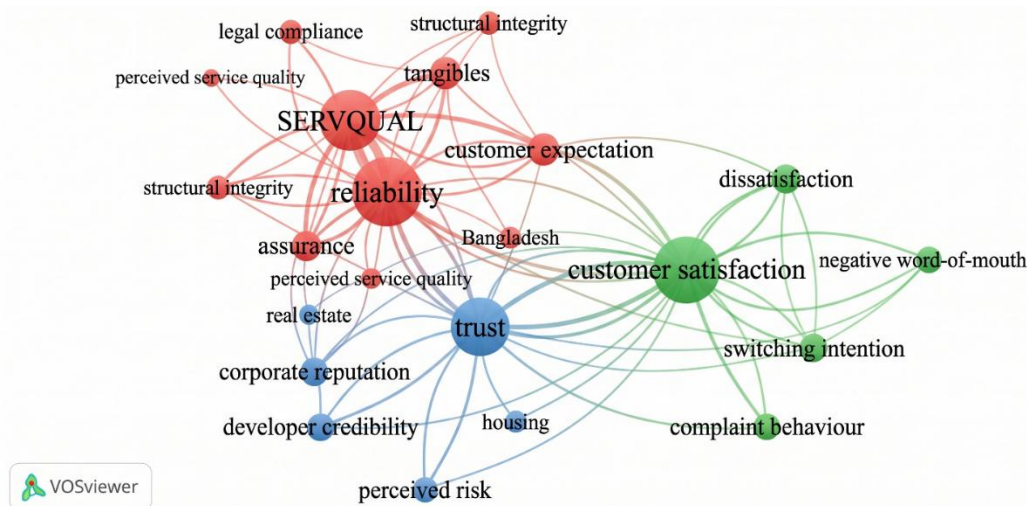


Figure 4 Keyword Co-occurrence Network

Cluster 1 (Red) — Determinants of Perceived Service Quality is the largest, central cluster. Anchor store on the words "SERVQUAL", "service quality", "customer expectation", "tangibles", "reliability" + responsiveness, - assurance and empathy and gap analysis. These terms being close together verifies that the substantive literature focuses on measuring customer expectations on a multidimensional basis, along with negative gap scores across all five SERVQUAL dimensions. The high centrality of “reliability” and “assurance” in this cluster supports the fact mentioned by the abstract, that these two dimensions directly affect overall satisfaction the most. In addition, the collective presence of the keywords "structural integrity", "timely completion" and "legal compliance", illustrates that although the existing literature is based on generalized SERVQUAL framework, a consistent effort seems to be made to adapt the tangibles and assurance dimensions of the generic model according to sector-specific attributes like structural quality, completion within promised time period or delivery date and legal compliance. Such mapping provides empirical evidence for the argument made in the introduction that the generic model overlooks some key contextual factors and that maintenance after handover, as well as communication transparency, are often surfaced as additional (rather than fully integrated) dimensions.

Cluster 2 (Green) – Behavioral Consequences of Dissatisfaction: customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, complaint behavior, negative word-of-mouth, switching intention, and loyalty. Dissatisfaction, and its strong links with negative word-of-mouth and switching intention, highlight the dominant focus of the literature on affective and conative outcomes of service failures. This cluster is less densely interconnected with the central SERVQUAL terms, signaling a split in the literature: studies tend either to measure quality dimensions (methods) or focus on the downstream behavioral consequences of service quality judgments, while there are fewer cumulative attempts to model both behaviors in one single framework. The term ‘complaint management’ emerges at the margins, indicating that grievance handling mechanisms, although acknowledged, still remain to be systematically concept-theorized or quantified. This result supports the earlier findings that we have shown: agency problems and information asymmetry fuel negative word-of-mouth, but empirical attention to effective complaint resolution still remains low.

Cluster 3 (Blue) – Moderating Effects of Corporate Reputation and Trust is the smallest cluster, but was one of the most theoretically meaningful clusters. Keywords are used, you will see key terms like “corporate reputation,” “trust,” “perceived risk,” “brand image,” And developer credibility. The placement of ‘trust’ at the junction between the quality-determinant cluster and the behavioral-consequences cluster points to its proposed moderation role. In particular, the co-occurrent patterns indicate that trust is both a consequence (specifically, of repeated service performance in terms of reliability and assurance) and an insulator – helping to absorb adverse word-of-mouth and switching intentions when services are not always performed well. This duality is aligned with the mention of moderating roles of corporate reputation and trust in the introduction and provides an important avenue for model testing that has not been thoroughly tackled in existing literature.

3.5 Thematic Development and Process Mapping for Strategy

In order to accurately reflect the temporal dynamics of the field, we performed thematic evolution analysis by separating the publication window into two sub-time periods: 2005–2018 (pre-surge phase, $n = 5$ studies) and 2019–2025 (post-surge phase, $n = 14$ studies). By plotting the results of Biblioshiny’s multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) on keywords into a strategic diagram in which Callon’s centrality (the interconnection degree between themes) was plotted on the x-axis and density (internal development of theme) on the y-axis (Figure 5).

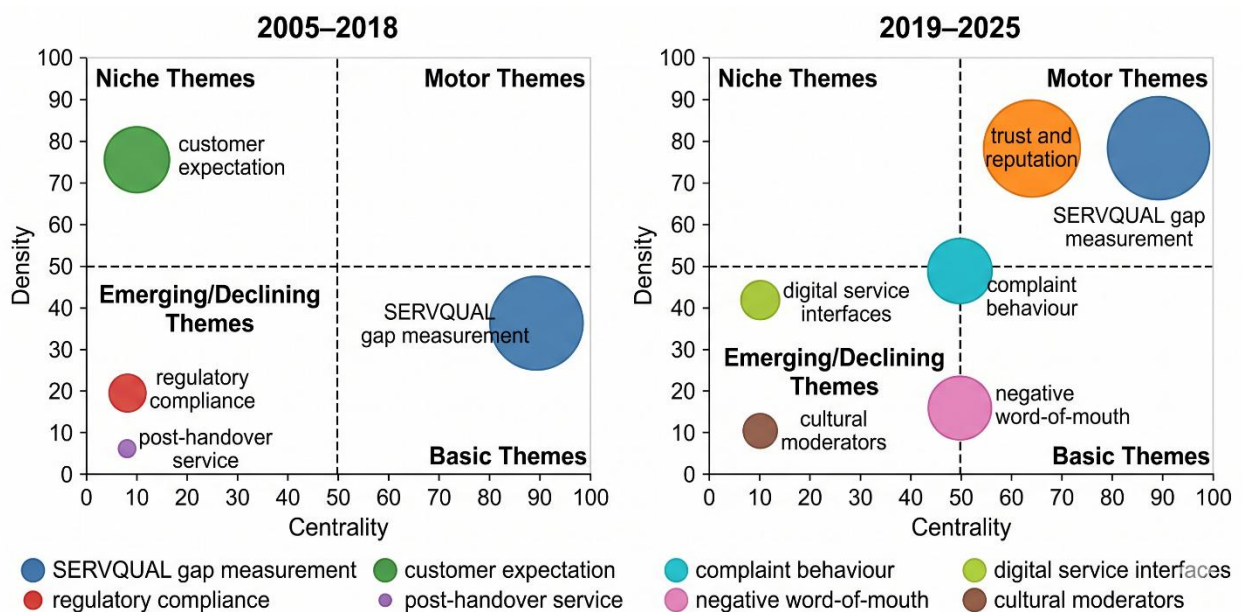


Figure 5 Thematic Map (Strategic Diagram)

The first sub-period (2005–2018) in the thematic map illustrates a landscape of basic and emerging themes. The cluster SERVQUAL gap measurement, representing a basic theme with high centrality but low density, is the case

of showing that it had highly centrality connecting multiple studies in diverse contexts but/or using some instruments through adapting its measures only without further internal theoretical development meaning, in this study case where their generic instrument was applied to different context countries and also serve as benchmark for relatively more standardized adaptational application only use. "Customer expectation" developed as a niche theme with high density but low centrality, echoing early descriptive surveys cataloguing expectation elements that did not feed into broader theoretical arguments. The themes "regulatory compliance" and "post-handover service" were at a much earlier stage as emerging ones in the lower-left quadrant, suggesting that they were mentioned but not yet systematically researched.

In the second sub-period (2019–2025), this thematic reconfiguration is clearly significant. The SERVQUAL gap measurement cluster is still an overarching motor theme, but it has densified to indicate greater theoretical maturation whereby studies more regularly test context-specific sub-dimensions, utilize structural equation modelling for testing dimensional interlayer associations and explicitly discuss the limitations of the generic model. Trust and reputation, initially a specialist theme, has shifted to be an engine of theme with high centrality and density due to the boom in studies that test whether trust acts as mediator or moderator between service quality and satisfaction. This development corroborates the observation made in the abstract regarding a moderating effect of corporate reputation and trust. At the same time, both "complaint behavior" and "negative word-of-mouth" have progressed from the emerging to the basic-theme quadrant, meaning that these behavioral consequences are now usually measured as outcome variables but do not yet have sufficient density of theory developed, which would allow them to be motor themes in their own right. Most relevantly, we find new lines of enquiry like 'digital service interfaces' and 'cultural moderators' in the 2019–2025 map: These themes are found in the lower-right-hand side of the plot, exactly where our proposed future research agenda should be set. This pattern of thematic evolution reinforces the idea that the field is moving from a descriptive, gap-measurement approach to a more complex, nomological-network orientation while still limited by heavy reliance on cross-sectional designs.

All in all, the bibliometric assessment describes a nascent but fast-growing domain. Since 2019, publishing activity has increased dramatically, but primarily in regional business and quality–management journals with little international impact. There are weak author collaborations, no research group has emerged as dominant, leading to a homogeneous methodological landscape, i.e., cross-sectional, developer-centric surveys. Nevertheless, these three literary questions are robustly identified through the keyword and thematic analysis that identifies three intellectual clusters that underpinned service quality determinants, consequences, and moderators. The thematic evolution is also an encouraging sign, although slow, that shows a maturing of the field toward more integrative and theoretically robust inquiries. These bibliometric insights serve as a quantitative foundation for the thematic synthesis that follows and provide empirical support to the conceptual framework that is later presented within the paper.

4. Thematic Synthesis

The reviewed literature highlights hierarchical layers of customer expectations in the Bangladesh real estate sector, ranging from structural integrity and timely completion (foundational tangibles), legal compliance and documentation transparency (a non-negotiable legal-assurance dimension), to relational communication such as responsiveness, empathy, and proactivity towards problem solving. Empirical applications of SERVQUAL consistently find significant negative gap scores across all five original dimensions, with the widest gaps typically in reliability and assurance—dimensions that are among the strongest predictors of overall satisfaction and that most often mediate the effects of tangibles and responsiveness. Importantly, the data called uniformly for three additional, enhanced dimensions be included: 1) regulatory compliance (the specification of clear legal titles and approvals), 2) post-handover maintenance (developer accountability for repairs after possession) and 3) transparent communications (full honesty with timely disclosure of delays and problems); evidence which best matched the variance concerns particular to the high-involvement property market that renders information asymmetry adaptable into hygiene factors and trust builders.

Specifically, breaches (Risks: Post-handover performance relating to reliability, legal compliance, and maintenance) are reliable antecedents of negative word-of-mouth and intentions to switch, exacerbated by dense networks of social capital interactions and poorly developed complaint-handling systems. However, these behavioral outcomes are not invariant: company reputation and prior trust moderate the effect of service failures on repeat purchasing behavior, with developers enjoying positive status receiving more forgiveness and the benefit of the doubt. Overall, the synthesis provides an integrative structure in which customer expectations (operationalized via an expanded SERVQUAL) are compared to perceived service delivery to yield gap scores that drive satisfaction and also loyalty, word-of-mouth, and switching intentions, with trust and reputation moderating the major paths identified, while complaint management represents a possible recovery loop (see Figure 6). This framework synthesizes the three bibliometric clusters (determinants of quality, behavioral consequences, and moderating factors) and provides a testable structure for future research in emerging-economy real estate contexts.

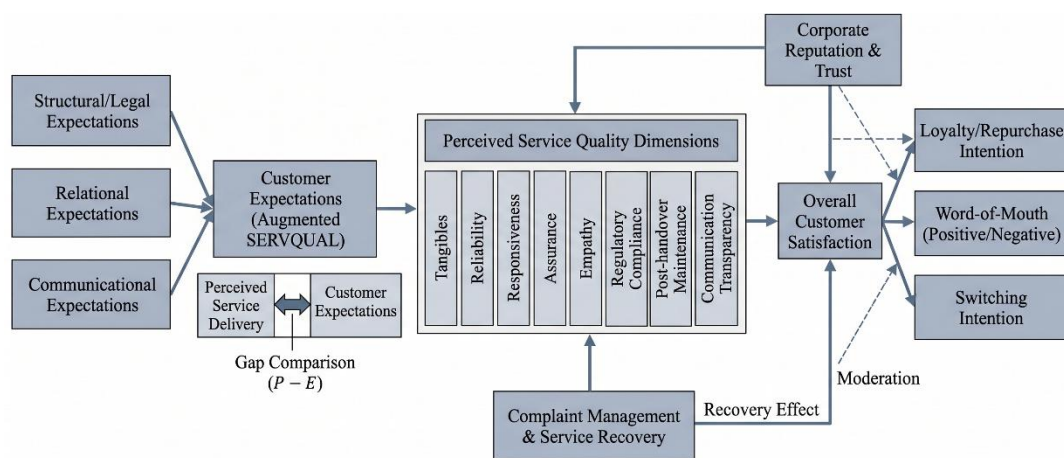


Figure 6 Integrative Framework of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction in Bangladeshi Real Estate

5. Conclusion

This paper is the first systematic and bibliometric literature review of service quality and customer satisfaction research within Bangladesh's real estate domain, where 19 peer-reviewed studies published from 2005 up to today (date) are synthesized. The review exposes multiple, structural, timely, legal, and relational facets of customer expectation in this high-involvement, information-asymmetric market. They always record significant negative gaps on all five dimensions, and reliability and assurance are consistently the strongest drivers of overall satisfaction. Importantly, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that the generic model significantly misunderstands critical contextual features—like regulatory compliance, post-handover maintenance, and communication transparency—that are hygiene factors (and trust-builders) for the Bangladeshi property market. The bibliometric scrutiny finds three intellectual clusters: determinants of perceived service quality, behavioral outcomes of dissatisfaction, and the moderating roles of corporate reputation and trust, which collectively build an integrating framework (Figure 6) that connects service performance, satisfaction, and loyalty. At a practical level, these findings challenge developers to incorporate these augmented dimensions into their service blueprints, regulators to codify minimum standards for disclosure and maintenance regulations, and marketers to establish brand trust through transparency. This review fuses a fragmented body of evidence into a cogent, highly testable framework, offering rigorous groundwork for both scholarly advancement and industry reform in an emerging-economy real estate context.

Current literature on JGMs has expanded rapidly since 2019; however, it remains limited by cross-sectional, developer-oriented designs, few international collaborations, and publication in narrow geographical venues. Now is the time for future research to turn away from static measures of gaps and truly adopt an agenda of longitudinal studies that follow customers as their expectations, satisfaction, and issues change over the life of a property,

through pre-purchase inquiry to construction, all the way through years after handover. Equally urgent are methodological diversifications — qualitative and mixed-method inquiries to explore the cultural moderators (collectivism, power distance, and interpersonal trust) which shape complaint behaviors and forgiveness (i.e., compensation mechanisms), along with multi-stakeholder perspectives integrating tenants, real estate agents/financiers/regulatory bodies for a 360-degree view of the service ecosystem. The digitalization of customer interfaces is developing more unusually fast - mobile apps to know where work stands, AI in the complaining process, and virtual property tours - allowing for exploration of how technology-mediated touch points shape our understanding of service quality dimensions. Second, there is a need for cross-country comparative research involving other South Asian markets that would allow testing the generalizability of the altered SERVQUAL framework and highlight how differences in institutions moderate the quality–satisfaction–loyalty link. Finally, the complete lack of accuracy in research on complaint management and service recovery suggests an important new gap that is urgent; elucidating which recovery strategies restore trust and cause resistant WM (word-of-mouth-response) is a much-needed next step for both theory and practice.

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