

**THE EFFECTS OF NATIONAL CULTURE ON SERVICE QUALITY  
TOWARDS A NEW MODEL IN THE HOTEL SECTOR**

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TOWARDS A NEW MODEL IN THE HOTEL SECTOR**

**DISSERTATION**

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the degree of doctor at the University of Twente,  
on the authority of the rector magnificus,  
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Yasser Ahmed Al Tayeb

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د/ ياسر أحمد الطيب



*To my Father, Mother, Brothers, Wife, Sons; “Ali” and “Abd El Rahman”*



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# Chapter 1. Research Overview: Service Quality in the Hotel Sector

## 1.1 Emerging Cultural Issues of Service Quality in the Hotel Sector

Service quality challenges in the Egyptian hotel sector have increased since Egypt opened its tourism markets to international tourists in the 1980s. The rapid infusion and diffusion of international tourist arrivals placed a great hotel guest demand on the local hotel sector in Egypt. For instance, in 2002 Egypt had more than seven million international tourist arrivals coming from 32 countries and spending more than 32 million accommodation nights in Egypt<sup>1</sup>. The open market situation in Egypt has brought both benefit and problems for local hotel providers. On one hand, apart from the direct benefits, it has brought with it the opportunity to establish a competitive advantage based upon delivering luxury hotel services to satisfy international guests' expectations and needs. But, on the other hand, serving heterogeneous international hotel guests, from dissimilar countries and different national culture backgrounds, has created difficulties and complexities for local hotel providers in respect of delivering high service quality within their hotel units. In essence, the cultural diversity or the difference between local hotel providers and hotel guests has also caused several service quality problems and failures or what are called "*service quality gaps*".

For instance<sup>2</sup>, because Egypt has high collectivism culture, or as Kabasakal & Bodur (2002, p. 40) call it "*high group-oriented*" country within the cluster of Arabic countries, the concept of truth is relative and depends upon the social situation. In Egypt, truth involves being worried about consequences of one's own words or behaviors for other people, and so not revealing negative thoughts and avoiding negative answers. Therefore, at the hotel service quality level, when an Egyptian hotel receptionist replies by saying "*No Problem*", as hotel standards and rules suggest, to Western guests who complain about their room reservations; this means that the problem exists and it will be solved as soon as possible. But, on the other side, "*No Problem*" for Western guests means that their reservation problem is already solved and has disappeared since "*No Problem*" refers to the truth, which means for Western cultures straightforwardness and what actually has happened in reality. Consequently, this is perceived as a lack/gap of hotel service quality from the Western guests' point of view.

Another example, one concerning hotel standards allows that hotel housekeepers to use facilities in the guestroom such as the room telephone so that they could rapidly solve guests' problems and complaints. But, on the other side, American guests perceive this as a lack of service quality. Seen from a cultural viewpoint, in American societies where people are individual oriented, it is very difficult to use or even touch Americans' personal belongs or their hotel room belonging such as the room telephone. In this respect, the effects of national cultures create real difficulties and complexities in delivering better service quality in hotels.

Although these service quality problems and failures do not imply any cultural tensions or conflicts between hotel providers and hotel guests, they do reflect the inability of hotel providers to satisfy hotel guests' expectations and needs with regard to the effects of local culture (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). These service quality problems or gaps do not mean that local hotel providers in Egypt, or in any other country, should change their form of service quality delivery to absolutely match the expectations and needs of American guests or other specific nationalities. Nevertheless, hotel providers should realize that as their local culture affects the application of service quality within their hotels, it also profoundly affects the perceived and/or delivered service quality in interactions between themselves and their hotel guests.

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<sup>1</sup> Egyptian Tourism in Figures (2002).

<sup>2</sup> These examples are built based on empirical observations found in previous research and pilot study that are carried out by the author (2001- 2003) in the Egyptian hotel sector (see Al Tayeb 2003).

Reisinger and Turner claim that a host (service provider) should respond to the cultural issues influencing themselves and the international guests they serve by firstly explaining the role of the provider's national culture in improving as well as creating a positive delivered services (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Similarly, in a notable work by Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, p. 49), the authors clarify that national culture is an important factor in services that involve international delivery features, such as hotels, where hotel services are delivered to heterogeneous international hotel guests from dissimilar countries and cultures, because: "*it, national culture, influences how companies and their service employees interact with customers*". The authors conclude that an explanation of how this factor affects service quality is needed in order to enrich and enhance the existing literature on service quality as well as service quality in practice within service organizations.

Furthermore, Armstrong *et al.* (1997) and Hallowell *et al.* (2002) also empirically show that even within international hotels and multinational hotel chains, a lack of explanation as to how national culture affects service quality introduces real service quality problems or gaps that should be dealt with. For instance, Hallowell *et al.* (2002) point out that service quality in the *Four Seasons* hotel has certain national cultural influences when the hotel service is delivered for French guests and that, in turn, makes the hotel sector as an appropriate research area to empirically examine the effects of national culture on service quality.

## 1.2 The Research Problem

The previous discussion, which is basically built on empirical observations in Egypt<sup>3</sup> as well as the literature on service quality in the hotel field, has led to the following research problem field:

*Service quality in the hotel sector has international and multicultural delivery features and this increases the challenges and problems of delivering improved service quality due to the effects of national culture. This situation contributes to the challenge of understanding how national culture affects service quality*

As stated earlier, Armstrong *et al.* (1997), Hallowell *et al.* (2002) and Zeithaml & Bitner (2003) make it empirically clear that national culture seems to affect service quality particularly in the hotel sector. Nevertheless, the mechanisms of how national culture affects service quality have not been explicitly explained (Hallowell *et al.* 2002). Given this situation, research into the effects of national culture on service quality is required in order to enhance the service quality body of knowledge and theory as well as improve service quality in reality (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

## 1.3 The Theoretical Positioning of the Research Problem

From a theoretical point of view, the main body of the literature on service quality has focused on modeling service quality as a function of service provider-customer gaps (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990). These conceptual gap models of service quality offer useful concepts and ideas on how service providers, i.e. hotels, close or eliminate such gaps in order to deliver better service quality as perceived by customers (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). However, these traditional gap models do not seem to be accurately applied in the cultural situation observed in the hotel sector since these models assume that all service quality gaps are the same regardless the national culture differences (Ekinci & Riley 1998; Imrie *et al.* 2002). In other words, these models assume that the extent

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<sup>3</sup> Although the empirical observations mainly deal with the Egyptian situation, the research problem reflects the hotel sector in general.

of each service quality gap, the gap size, is the same regardless of the national culture differences of service providers or customers, and this raises a theoretical question about the validity of conceptual gap models as applied to service quality (Armstrong *et al.* 1997; Ekinici & Riley 1998; Hallowell *et al.* 2002; Mattila 1999).

Moreover, Imrie *et al.* (2002) argue that the conceptual gap models of service quality created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry should consider “*the possible influence of the variety of cultures found in international markets*” (Imrie *et al.* 2002, p. 10). To add to this, the national culture literature offers useful notions on national culture concepts and dimensions, and how these dimensions differ from country to another. In this case, national culture refers to “*everything that people have in common*”, with most individuals from a nation sharing a dominant cultural nature, which is difficult to change (Hofstede 1980, 1991). As a culture scholar, Hofstede (1980, 1991) defines five dimensions of national culture: i.e. power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity and long- versus short-term orientation. Thus, national culture theory provides comprehensive conceptual models that can contribute to the gap models of service quality (Armstrong *et al.* 1997).

To conclude, the question as to how national culture affects service quality has recently been raised in the literature of service quality (Armstrong *et al.* 1997; Donthu & Yoo 1998; Hope 2004; Imrie *et al.* 2002; Mattila 1999). Although this literature gives empirical evidence that national culture seems to have an influential role on service quality, it has not addressed the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension affects the various service quality gaps (Hope 2004). Thus, there is a research need to take into account how national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps, something that traditional gap models do not appear to identify.

#### **1.4 The Research Question: Searching for Adequate Explanation**

In the field of management, there is a technique for building schematic descriptions of any phenomenon that provides an explanation for all or part of its known properties (Moreno Bragado 2003; Pidd 1996). Such a schematic description is referred to as a “*model*”. In general, a model is used to represent, describe or state an application for any phenomenon and is particularly popular in business organizations. Using the modeling technique has empirically been confirmed as an effective way to develop theoretical results and conclusions based on practical observations and evidence (Pidd 1996). Overall, the modeling technique seems to be a successful tool that could offer appropriate explanations of how national cultural dimensions affect service quality gaps in the hotel sector.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to build a new model that can offer preliminary explanations of how national culture affects service quality in a hotel setting. In this regard, the specific function of the model will be to find out and conceptualize the mechanisms by which national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps. Furthermore, the appropriateness of the new model will be determined by its ability to provide new insights that could help hotel providers (managers and service employees) to improve service quality in their hotels. Therefore, the main question underlying this research can be stated as follow:

*To what extent can a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations be built in order to help in improving service quality in the hotel sector?*

This main research question is rephrased using three sub-questions as follows:

1. What prototype model is appropriate for the assessment of the national culture - service quality relations?
2. How should the prototype model be evaluated in order to achieve a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations?
3. To what extent is the preliminary explanatory model of national culture-service quality relations theoretically adequate and practically helpful and usable in improving service quality in the hotel sector?

The main research question, the sub-questions, the objective and purpose of the research are inter-related in the next figure (Figure 1.1).

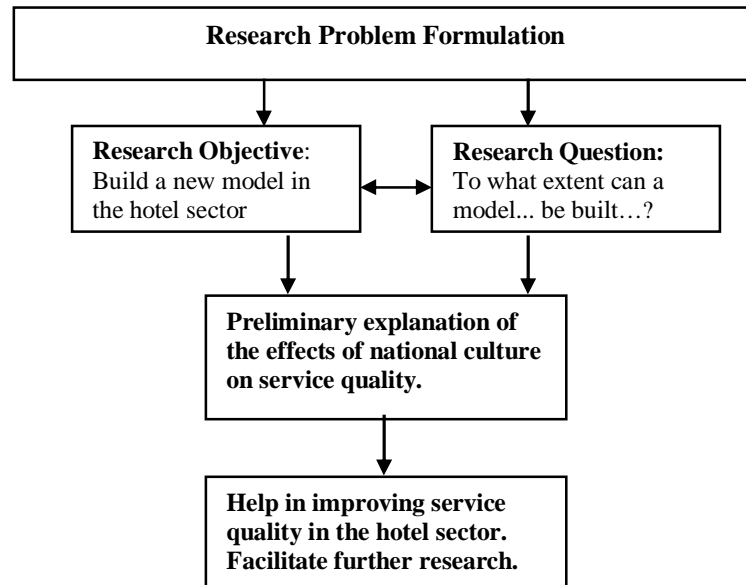


Figure 1.1 Research Formulation

Based on the earlier research formulation, the overall aims of the research are:

1. To describe and explain the concepts and models of service quality and national culture.
2. To build a preliminary explanatory model of national culture-service quality relations. This new model will be used to find out and conceptualize the mechanisms by which national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps. Eventually, the new model also could help hotel providers (managers and service employees) to improve service quality in their hotels.
3. To provide new theoretical and managerial implications and also suggestions for further research in the field of service quality and national culture.

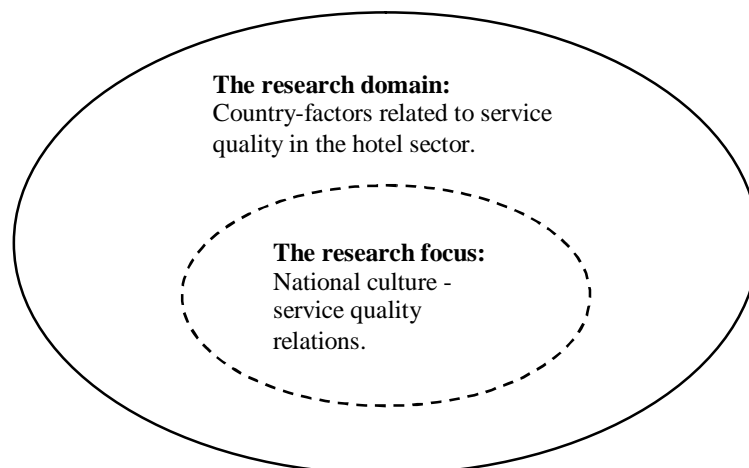
Based on this, the following research activities and tasks have been carried out in order to provide adequate answers to the research main question and its sub-questions:

1. The building of a prototype model to preliminarily explain the effects of national culture on service quality in the hotel sector. The new model should examine the effects of national culture dimensions on service quality elements/gaps.
2. The evaluation of the prototype model in two national hotel contexts (Egyptian and Dutch). The Egyptian and Dutch hotel sectors were selected as cultural environments that generally display “opposing” cultural features (based on Hofstede’s Culture Model and his cross-national culture research 1980, 1984, 1991).

3. The improvement of the prototype model to develop a final new model. This model should shed light on the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension affects each service quality element/gap.
4. Approaching this model into a new constructed working theory for further research in service quality and national culture fields.

### 1.5 The Research Focus

Empirical observations in the hotel sector provide the reason and motivation for carrying out this model construction research. In fact, the effects of national culture on service quality are not only the emerging challenges facing hotel providers since service quality problems or gaps are embedded in other contextual challenges or factors (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). For instance, the research problem domain could involve many other challenges related to other country-factors such as local country laws and regulations, local country politics, local country economics and technological factors. Thus, investigating the effects of national culture on service quality does not imply that national culture is the only factor of improving service quality in this sector. Nevertheless, the results of this research will be a useful starting point for investigating and examining further country-related factors. The research domain and research focus are illustrated in Figure 1.2.



**Figure 1.2 Focus of the Research**

As suggested by Armstrong *et al.* (1997), Hallowell *et al.* (2002) and Zeithaml & Bitner (2003), this research also assumes that national culture affects service quality in the hotel context. However, explaining the effects of national culture on service quality based on only one cultural background is unrealistic. To overcome this, there is a need to involve at least two distinct cultures such as an Eastern one and a Western one. Therefore, Egyptian and Dutch national cultures are used in a balanced comparison in order to create preliminary explanations of how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector.

### 1.6 The Research Approach

To answer the research main question and its sub-questions, a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations will be constructed. This new model will be built upon theoretical as well as empirical observations and evidence gathered from multiple hotel case studies. In other words, the researcher is aiming to build a new theory of national culture-service quality relations with the intention of preliminarily explaining how national culture dimensions affect service quality elements and by which mechanisms. The research approach is grounded theory in nature since Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 12) define grounded

theory as “*theory that was derived from data systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process*”. Thus, the research model presented here is not a completely new theory<sup>4</sup> but a new model that is constructed and then situated between service quality theory and national culture theory.

Kekäle (1998, p. 11) provides more details on the constructive research approach by stating that “*the problem and limitation with this type of approach is the difficulty in generalizing the results, because of the observations are normally made in few case organizations...*”. As Kekäle shows in his work, the generalizability of a new construction, i.e. the new theory, should be provided by “*applying the results to different cases*” (Kekäle 1998, p. 11). In this respect, Egyptian and Dutch hotel case studies are used to evaluate the new research model. Four hotel case studies are presented in the research empirical investigation: two Egyptian and two Dutch, which were selected to represent two distinct types of national culture. The examination of the real behaviors and practices of service quality and the national culture values and beliefs in each hotel case/provider enabled the researcher to determine the differences between them. The research proposes that such differences exist because of the effects of national culture on service quality.

### 1.7 The Research Concepts

There are two main concepts used in this research: service quality and national culture. These two concepts are described in depth in the following subsections.

#### 1.7.1 Service Quality

Because of the various approaches of researchers in investigating the service quality construct, there is a need to clarify what is exactly meant by service quality in this research. In general, service quality is viewed as consists of attributes, dimensions, measurement methods and models (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, p. 20). Consequently, the quality of service is different from the quality of manufactured good. The intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability of services make them different from goods. The differences are embodied in the four attributes used to define the quality of services and the methods used to provide as well as receive this quality. Taking this as a starting point, service quality in this research has a dual meaning for the two service actors: **1)** the service provider as a service organization, where managers and frontline service employees work together; and **2)** service receiver/customer as external individuals.

On this basis, service quality is a synthesizable construct of both provider and customer approaches (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml 1988, 1990). From the customer side, service quality means the degree to which the services in use meet customers’ expectations (Parasuraman, *et al.* 1985). In this perspective, service quality for customers is in their “*perception*”. In other words, service achieves quality in customers’ perception when it meets their expectations. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) label this first part of service quality “*perceived service quality*”. Similarly, Wetzels (1998, p. 8) states it somewhat eloquently, “*perceived service quality is a concept of quality, which can be characterized as a customer-oriented approach to quality*”. In this respect, perceived service quality is described as the discrepancy between customers’ expectations regarding a service and the perception of the actual service provided (Grönroos 1984; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).

From a provider point of view, service quality means conforming to specifications and requirements as “*delivered service quality*” (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990). In other words, a service provider/organization, or rather its managers and

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<sup>4</sup> See also Moreno Bragado (2003).

frontline service employees, should perform to specifications and requirements that satisfy external customers and meet their expectations. This research addresses two issues concerning service quality concept: Firstly, the ideal approach to cultural research and examining service quality in the hotel sector firstly needs to achieve a dyad balance in which the needs to the service customer (hotel individual guests) and the service organization (hotel managers and frontline service employees) are both taken into account. In line with the objectives of this research, service quality will specifically refer to “*delivered service quality*” with the main focus on the service provider perspective. Simply because the research attempts to preliminarily explain the effects of the provider’s culture national one the delivered service quality.

Secondly, the *Extended Gaps Model* (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990) is adopted in order to reflect the research focus. In the *Extended Gaps Model*, delivered service quality is determined by four internal service providers’ gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). Also, according to the *Extended Gaps Model*, perceived service quality can be viewed as the customer gap (Gap 5), and the extent of this customer gap (Gap 5) is determined by the four internal service provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4):

- Information Gap (Gap 1): the difference between customer expectations and provider management perceptions of customer expectations.
- Specifications Gap (Gap 2): the difference between provider management perceptions of customer expectations and service quality specifications.
- Performance Gap (Gap 3): the difference between service quality specifications and the service actually performed.
- Communications Gap (Gap 4): the difference between service performance and what is communicated about the service to external customers.

These four internal service provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) suggest a research framework for “*delivered service quality*” within service organizations. In this framework, delivered service quality is ultimately determined by managerial causes as the antecedents of these four internal gaps. Based on this, national culture theory appears to contribute to the (delivered/perceived) service quality in terms of the five gaps (Gaps 1 to 5). The potential contribution of national culture theory to “*delivered service quality*” (Gaps 1 to 4) will be the major focus in this research.

### **1.7.2 National Culture**

National culture has been defined using different approaches and conceptualized at several levels (Meekanon 2002). In fact, most of national culture conceptions are usually offered in statements of people’s specific values and beliefs that are translated into apparent cultural artefacts, individual behaviors and then practices (Hofstede 1980, 1991). Based on a social perspective, Hofstede (1991) defined national culture as “*the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the inhabitants of one country from another*”. Thus, culture, according to Hofstede’s approach, is “*a collective phenomenon*” as people or members of any collective group share it from the beginning of their lives.

Furthermore, Hofstede (1991) attempts to identify the national cultural meaning through a comparative approach. This approach is essentially built on finding out the national differences in cultural values among different countries based on the following dimensions of national culture: **1)** Power distance: the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede 1991, p. 28). **2)** Uncertainty avoidance: the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede 1991, p. 113). **3)** Individualism versus Collectivism: the extent to which the members of any

## Chapter 1

social group in a country or society (i.e. family, school, organization *etc*) identify themselves as either an individual or as a member of the group. 4) Long- versus short- term orientation: the extent to which the members/individuals of any social group in a country or society (i.e. family, school, organization...) are oriented towards either short-term or long-term goals on Confucian principle. In this research, Hofstede's approach to national culture is adopted in order to model the effects of national culture on service quality.

### 1.8 Thesis Outline and Contents

This thesis includes seven chapters as follows: Chapter 1 provides an overview of the problem area, the research main question and the research objective. It also introduces the research approach and concepts. Chapter 2 identifies the theoretical background of the research in terms of service quality and national culture theories. In particular, this chapter extensively presents the concepts, dimensions and models of both service quality and national culture. Chapter 3 presents the methodology followed in this research. It positions this research as based on qualitative methodology with the main focus on model building and development. The prototype model (M<sub>0</sub>) of national culture - service quality relations is built in Chapter 4 based on the outcomes of Chapters 2 and 3. In doing so, Chapter 4 answered the first sub-question of this research.

The prototype model (M<sub>0</sub>) is evaluated and then improved through two empirical investigations in the hotel sector. Each investigation consists of two hotel case studies, one in the Egyptian and one in the Dutch hotel sectors. The first empirical investigation presented in Chapter 5 evaluates the prototype model (M<sub>0</sub>) and determines the mechanisms through which each national culture dimensions affects service quality elements. As a result, Chapter 5 ends with an improved model (M<sub>1</sub>) of national culture-service quality relations.

Chapter 6 introduces the second empirical investigation that evaluates the improved model (M<sub>1</sub>) of national culture - service quality relations. This chapter ends with the final model (M<sub>2</sub>) of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. Both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 answered the second and third sub-questions posed in this research. In Chapter 7 concludes this thesis with a discussion of final conclusions, research model, and implications in terms of theoretical and managerial implications. In addition, the chapter addresses research limitations and makes suggestions for further research. The thesis outline and contents are illustrated in the Figure 1.3.

### 1.9 Summary

This chapter presented the foundation of this research in terms of the research problem addressed in the hotel sector, the research main question, sub questions and objective. Initially, this chapter identified the emerging cultural issues concerning service quality in the hotel sector and how these issues led to the formulation of the research problem. Secondly, the chapter theoretically positioned the research problem. Next, the main research question was rephrased more specifically through three sub-questions. In order to answer the research questions, four research activities were identified and outlined. The research focus and approach were also explicitly presented. Finally, this chapter ended with the research concepts and an outline of the rest of the thesis. Building on this foundation, the next chapter presents the theoretical background to this research with its main focus on service quality and national culture theories.



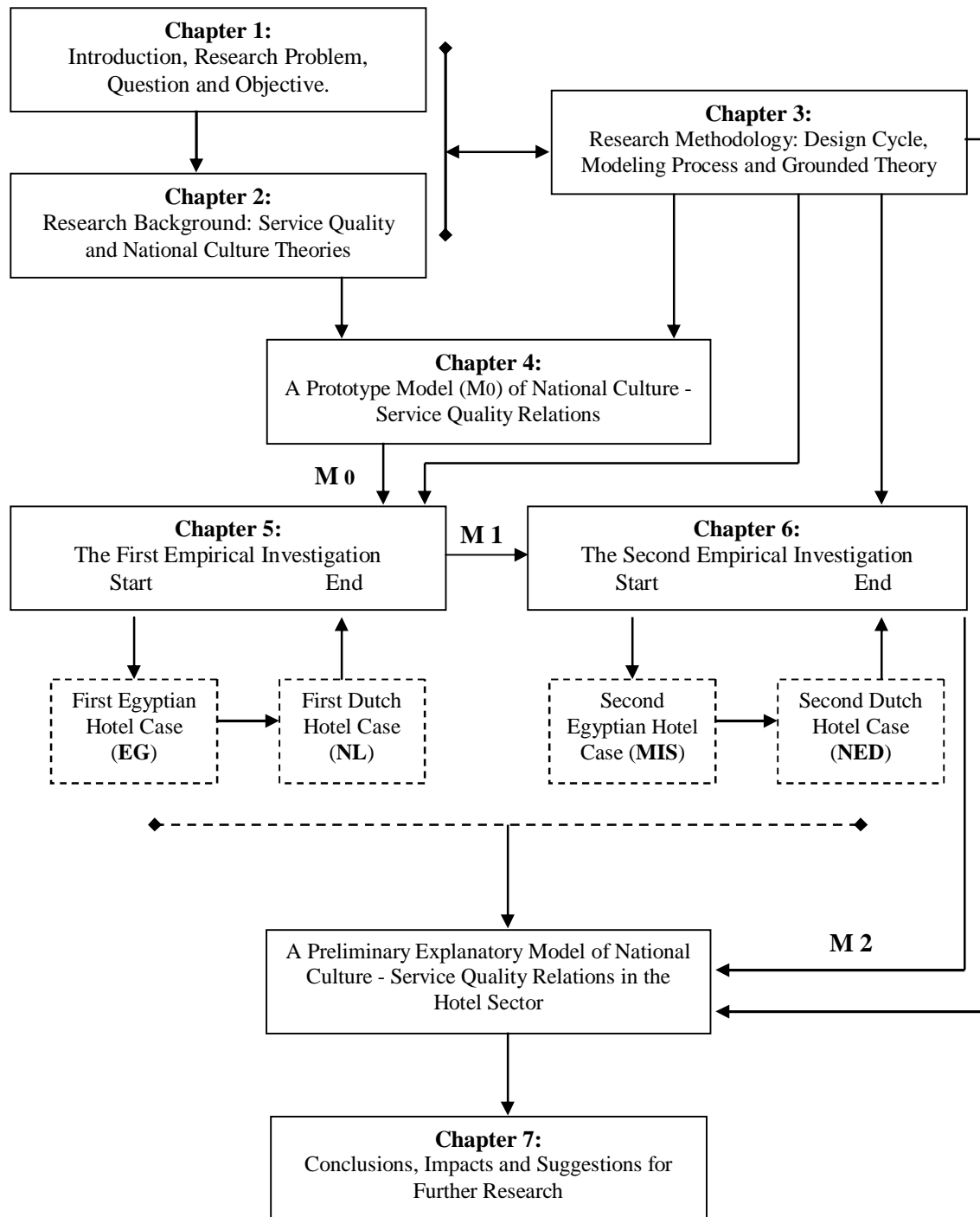


Figure 1. 3 Thesis Outline and Contents

**M0:** A prototype model of national culture - service quality relations.  
**M1:** An improved model of national culture - service quality relations.  
**M2:** A final model of national culture - service quality relations.

## Chapter 2. Research Background: Service Quality and National Culture Theories

### 2.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to present a partial explanation of how national culture affects service quality, and in particular to build a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. In this chapter, and before building the model, the existing literature on service quality and national culture theories are discussed as well as the literature that tries to link these two theories. By doing so, one can determine to what extent the existing literature has theoretically and empirically successfully explained the effects of national culture on service quality, and which major elements seem to be missing from the existing literature.

The service quality literature is discussed in terms of quality in services organizations, the service quality concept, service quality measurement dimensions and conceptual models of service quality. Taken together in Section 2.2, these concepts, dimensions and models describe service quality as a multidimensional construct that consists of: *perceived service quality* from the service customer's point of view and the *delivered service quality* from service the provider's point of view. Further, the conceptual models of service quality are critically reviewed in order to focus attention on the increasing conceptual concerns in literature surrounding these models. The review reveals that service quality theory in general, and conceptual gap models in particular, should reflect cultural influences. In other words, national culture seems to play a key role when conceptualizing and modeling service quality. Therefore, a national culture approach seems appropriate for further developing the service quality theory.

The national culture literature in Section 2.3 offers insights that concern defining culture, the national culture concept and the national culture dimensions which give rise to differences in national values, beliefs and the behaviors of individuals, of societies, and of members of collective groups such as service providers/organizations (i.e. banks, hotels, hospitals *etc.*) in these societies. In service quality means, the essence of national culture is manifest in service customers' attitudes and behaviors as well as in everyday working activities and environment of service providers: from the design of the service organization buildings, to the detailed organizational and managerial issues such as organizational structures, rules and procedures, decision-making processes, leadership style, human resource management and the strategic making process for service quality.

The literature which links national culture and service quality theories generally focuses on the effects of dimensions of national culture on both perceived service quality and delivered service quality. However, there is theoretical and empirical interest in assessing these cultural influences in general since the existing literature focuses on perceived service quality and not on delivered service quality. Essentially as concluded in Section 2.4, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical explanations of the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension seems to affect the delivered service quality. In Section 2.5, the gap in the existing literature leads to the conclusion that there is a need for further investigation in order to gain a better insight into the influential national culture and service quality relations. The research perspective chosen is to build a preliminary explanatory model that can integrate national culture dimensions and delivered service quality. This model will help, theoretically as well as empirically, to preliminarily explain the national culture-service quality relations that are missing in the existing literature. In Section 2.6, a summary of this chapter is presented.

## **2.2 Service Quality Theory**

Building an explanatory model that can integrate national culture and service quality in general, and in the hotel sector in particular, should be first based on an extensive understanding of what service quality actually means. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, p. 30) point out that service quality theory in general is not only limited to service customers but also to service providers (as service organizations) since it, service quality, challenges both service parties in a dyad provider-customer approach. Furthermore, they state that service quality theory should be considered as an integrating theory of “*customer focus across the service organization*”.

In essence, particular attention in service quality theory, as well as in practice, has always been given to: **1)** defining quality in service organizations and how services are different to manufacturing goods in terms of quality issues, **2)** how service customers expect and perceive service quality, **3)** how service providers (managers and service employees) deliver or perform service quality and finally **4)** the modeling of service quality between service providers and customers. In this respect, the service quality literature gives a focus with which to try to integrate organizational, managerial and marketing theories in order to fully understand what service quality means for both service provider and service customer <sup>5</sup> (Cândido 2001; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, Wetzels, 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

In this section, four main aspects of service quality theory are discussed. To begin with, how to define quality in service organizations is considered. Secondly, the service quality concepts and definitions are given in order to explain the multidimensional nature of service quality construct. Thirdly, service quality measurement dimensions are presented. Finally, conceptual models of service quality are addressed with special attention to the conceptual gap models. These models are considered as the most comprehensive representations of service quality theory (Cândido 2001; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).

### **2.2.1 Defining Quality in Service Organizations**

Quality in service organizations, as service providers, is obviously a critical factor that service managers and service employees have to deal with in order to increase the performance of their service organizations in terms of profitability and achieving customer satisfaction (Cândido 2001; Garvin 1984, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Van Looy *et al.* 2003; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). Moreover, improving the quality levels of delivered services has become the focal point within many service organizations in order to compete and survive in today’s global markets. The quality research into service organizations has encompassed marketing, organizational and managerial perspectives reflecting the multiple approaches taken by scholars from different disciplines in defining the quality issue (Cândido 2001; Van Looy *et al.* 2003; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

The origins of the quality concept began in manufacturing, and many of the tools for quality improvements were developed for overcoming manufacturing problems. In a broad sense, quality refers to the degree of the good/service’s excellence (Crobsy 1979; Evans & Lindsay 1994, Garvin 1984, 1988; Wetzels 1998). Nevertheless, the quality concept is defined in different ways using different approaches (Cândido 2001; Garvin 1984; Crobsy 1979; Wetzels 1998). For instance: Garvin (1984) discusses five different approaches to defining quality as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> Texts such as Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) and Zeithaml *et al.* (1988, 1990) provide an overview of the developments in the theory of service quality.

- **Transcendent Definition**

Within this approach, a common notion of quality is that “*it is synonymous with superiority or innate excellence*” (Garvin 1984, p. 40). He labels this the “*transcendent definition*”, which Evans and Lindsay (1994, p. 9) also define in more detail as “*the totality of features and characteristics of product/service that bears on its ability to satisfy given needs*”. This definition assumes that quality is universally recognizable and an absolute issue. In other words, quality can be related to a comparison of features and characteristics of products or services (Garvin 1984; Evans & Lindsay 1994; Wetzels 1998). Accordingly, Wetzels (1998) argues that the true quality cannot be precisely defined but can only be recognized through experience. He also acknowledges that the definition’s practical applicability is limited.

- **Product-Based Definition**

Within this approach, quality is a precise and measurable variable, and differences in quality reflect differences in the quantity of certain product attributes; for instance, the number of stitches per inch on a shirt (Crobsy 1979; Garvin 1984, 1988; Wetzels 1998). One major assumption underlying this definition suggests that quality is often related to cost: the higher the cost, the higher the quality. This implies that quality can only be achieved through a number of particular attributes costing more. However, a product does need to be expensive in order to be ranked as being of high quality (Wetzels 1998).

- **User-Based Definition**

A third definition adopts a user-based approach and, as a result, quality is defined as “*fitness for intended use*” or how well the product performs its intended function. To determine the fitness for intended use, one must consider issues such as the product’s intended use, frequency of use, cost, performance, reliability, and serviceability requirements. This user-based definition is always driven by customer satisfaction, and has become the most important definition of quality from a managerial perspective (Garvin 1984, 1988; Wetzels 1998).

- **Manufacturing-Based Definition**

A fourth approach defines quality as a final result of engineering and manufacturing practice or, in other words, quality is *conformance to specifications*. Specifications are targets and objective standards determined by the service provider/product manufacturer. This definition assumes that; high quality can be achieved by meeting specific targets or specifications (Crobsy 1979; Garvin 1984, 1988; Wetzels 1998). It is extensively used in the context of technical aspects of quality control.

- **Value-Based Definition**

Finally, the value-based approach states that quality is defined in terms of costs to the producer and prices to the customers: a high quality product is one that provides performance at an acceptable price or conformance at an acceptable cost. Garvin (1984 as cited in Wetzels 1998, p. 20) gives an example to explain this perspective: “... a \$ 500 running shoe, no matter how well constructed, could not be a quality product, for it would find few buyers”. Wetzels (1998) argues that this value-based definition combines two different concepts; quality and value. As a result, this leads to difficulty in applying this definition in practice. By the end of 1980s, and corresponding with the notable growth of service sectors, a more distinguishable quality approach emerged particularly within service organizations. Service organizations are generally described as “*those organizations primarily engaged in providing a wide variety of services for individuals, business and government establishments and other*

organizations” (Evans & Lindsay 1994, p. 25). The rapid growth of service sectors has introduced new perspectives on the quality issue and what it exactly means. Service organizations such as banks, hotels, and hospitals do not produce tangible goods. The interaction between service employees and customers is critical in such organizations. In this respect, quality in a service organization refers to meeting or exceeding external customer expectations and needs (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).

The delivery of services differs from manufacturing goods in many ways, and this in turn makes the quality issue in service organizations different from that in manufacturing ones. For instance, the output of service organizations is generally intangible, where manufacturers produce tangible and visible products (see Table 2.1). Service organizations usually handle a large volume of transactions. Services are consumed as they are created and cannot be stored as manufacturing goods. Further, services are generally labor intensive, whereas manufacturing is capital intensive. In service organizations, service employees and customers often have to interact the service to be delivered. Furthermore, some would argue that the service quality perceived by customers, increases/decreases based on customers interaction with service personnel.

Services	Manufacturing Goods	Resulting Quality Implications
Intangible	Tangible	Services are performed not produced, and quality depends on that performance. Service employees are viewed as signs of quality (quality depends on people). No direct quality control.
Simultaneous Production and Consumption	Production separate from Consumption	Service customers participate in and affect the service transition. Service customers affect each other in quality measures. Service employees affect service quality outcome. It is not possible to hide quality shortfalls & mistakes.
Heterogeneous	Homogenous (Standardized)	Service delivery and customer satisfaction depend on service employees’ behaviors and actions. Service quality depends on many uncontrollable factors.
Perishable	Nonperishable	It is difficult to have a final quality check (delivering services right first time, every time). Service cannot be returned or resold.

**Table 2.1 Differences between Services and Manufacturing Goods**

Source: Adjusted from Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, p. 20)

Moreover, the production process for services usually requires a higher degree of customization than that of manufacturing goods. This customization usually reflects the heterogeneity aspect of service or the potential for variability in the service performance. In other words, the interaction with service customers should be taken into consideration when the service is designed, performed and delivered (Cândido 2001). To conclude, these differences between services and manufacturing goods have important implications for the quality issue in service organizations. For instance, the simultaneity of services results in service customers not only expecting high service quality, but also being interested in the person/employee providing the service (Van Looy 2003, Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). Similarly, simultaneous service production and consumption makes it difficult to check the service quality before the services are consumed. As a result, poor quality cannot always be detected and rejected before a customer consumes the delivered service.

In considering the five different approaches to quality and the critical differences between manufacturing goods and services, a need for different definitions of quality is apparent when dealing with quality issues in service organizations. Wetzels (1998) argues that a synthesis of all the quality approaches is especially needed in service settings. As quality perspectives change at differing points in delivering services, a reliance on a single quality approach or definition is frequently a source of problems (Cândido 2001; Wetzels 1998). All the quality defining approaches and views noted above are relevant and should be embodied in the overall service quality concept (Garvin 1984, 1988; Gummesson 1991; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). This integrated concept of the quality issue is identifiable in both service quality theory and practice. In the following sections, the service quality theory is further discussed under three main topics: service quality concept, measurement dimensions and, finally, service quality models.

### 2.2.2 Service Quality Concept

Service quality is the key to the success or failure of service providers in satisfying their customers by fulfilling their expectations and needs. Further, delivering high service quality to customers gives long-term market benefits to service providers. Moreover, services currently represent about 20% of global trade and the service sector <sup>6</sup> makes a critical contribution to the economic growth of developed and developing countries alike. (see Table 2.2).

Country \ Years	Belgium	France	Netherlands	China	Egypt	India
1970	56	51	-	24	42	34
1980	66	64	65	21	45	37
1990	69	70	68	31	52	41
1999/2000	73	-	74	33	51	46
<b>Average</b>	66%	61%	69%	27%	47%	40%

**Table 2.2 Contribution of Service Sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Some Developed and Developing Countries, 1970-2000 (%)**

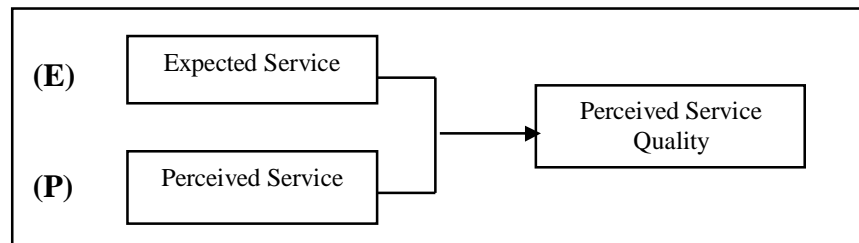
Source: Van Looy *et al.* (2003, pp. 6-7)

The review of the literature on service quality has shown that there is no agreement on a single concept for service quality (Berry 1999, Cândido 2001; Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). This is largely because services tend to be more intangible, heterogeneous, involve simultaneous production and consumption, and be more perishable than manufacturing goods. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) consider service quality to be a complex concept and difficult to fully explain and control in comparison with the quality concept in manufacturing due to the intangibility and heterogeneous nature of services (Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). According to Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), the service quality concept is essentially built on a customer perspective because it is customers as users who ultimately assess the quality of the services they receive.

Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1990) conceptualize service quality as the difference between customers' expectations and their perceptions of the delivered service, as well as the actual performance of the service providers (see Figure 2.1). Therefore, Parasuraman *et al.* (1988, as cited in Wetzels, 1998, p.21) define perceived service quality as "*the degree and direction of discrepancy between customers' expectations and perceptions*". Similarly, Wetzels (1998, p.

<sup>6</sup> The service sector is defined, by the International Standard Industrial Classification, as ; *wholesale and retail trade; restaurants and hotels; transport, storage and communication, financing; insurance, real estate and business services, community, social and personal services* (Van Looy 2003, p. 6).

21) accepts this view in defining the quality of services as “*extremely user-based perspective*”, which is in line with the quality notion and approach of Garvin (1984, 1988). Accordingly, from the service customer perspective, service quality is usually defined as the difference between the expected service and the perceived service. Although service quality is difficult to fully control because of service intangibility heterogeneity, perishability and simultaneity, excellent perceived service quality can be achieved if a customer’s expectations are met or exceeded, while poor perceived service quality occurs if the customer’s expectations are not met (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).



**Figure 2.1 Service Quality as Perceived by Customer**  
 Source: Zeithaml *et al.*, (1985)

In other words, service customers measure and evaluate perceived service quality by comparing the service expectations they had before consuming the delivered service with their perceptions of the actual service after experiencing it (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990). The various measures and evaluations of perceived service quality can be discussed by applying the concept reflected in Figure 2.1. For instance, once the Perceived Service (P) equals Expected Service (E), the expectations of the service customer have been exactly met. In this case, the service quality is acceptable to those particular service customers (Cândido 2001; Grönroos 1990; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988). Furthermore, once Perceived Service (P) is greater than Expected Service (E), the delivered quality exceeds what was expected and the customers are satisfied. Finally if the Expected Service (E) exceeds the Perceived Service (P), the expected service quality is not met and the actual delivered service quality is seen as unacceptable.

From the service provider’s point of view, service quality is conceptualized as “*conformance to specifications and requirements*” (Crosby 1979). Similarly, Wetzels (1998, p. 20) concerns with this view by defining service quality as a “*manufacturing-based perspective*”, a view based on the quality approach of Crosby (1979) and Luchs (1986). According to Zeithaml *et al.* (1988) the service quality concept is essentially built from a service provider perspective. The authors define service quality as “*the outcome of an evaluation process, where the services customers judge the overall excellence or superiority of actual delivered services*”. This approach considers meeting the given service specifications and standards as amounting to high service quality. In other words, service providers, as service organizations, should meet service specifications and requirements to satisfy external customers. Accordingly, service providers should use customer expectations and needs as quality specifications and requirements in determining the right level to perform at. Note that there are external factors, which also contribute to the formation of customer expectations and needs but these factors are not under the control of the service providers. These include customer past experiences, word-of-mouth communications, and service provider image or reputation (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).

To conclude, an integrated approach using the above two perspectives of service quality concept is needed in order to fully understand what service quality means to both service customers and service providers. This research aims to consider the ideal approach for

examining the effects of national culture on service quality in the hotel sector. Firstly, in order to achieve a balance between service quality conceptualized as “*perceived service quality*”, in which the cultural effects concern hotel guests as service customers/individuals, and “*delivered service quality*” where the cultural effects concern hotel providers as service organizations. The provider-customer dyad approach, as suggested by Zeithaml *et al.* (1988, 1990), is adopted in this research to conceptualize service quality (as presented in Chapters 1 to 4). Secondly, in order to focus on the service providers perspective, service quality is conceptualized as “*delivered service quality*” in order to model the effects of national culture on service quality (as presented in Chapters 4 to 8).

### 2.2.3 Service Quality Dimensions

While service quality is usually conceptualized as a multidimensional construct (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985), there is no general agreement as to the nature or content of the service quality dimensions. By service quality dimensions we refer to the criteria used by service customers in measuring and judging the perceived service quality (Gönroos 1984, 1990; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990). One of the essential criteria for measuring service quality is based on the classification developed by Gönroos (1984) that divides service quality into three aggregated dimensions: the “*technical*”, the “*functional*” and the “*image*” dimensions. The first type of dimensions “*technical*” generally refers to actual technical outcomes of the service encounter. In other words, the technical dimension represents the technical solutions that are given to service customers to solve their problems with the delivered services: “*what is received*”. Both service customers and service providers can objectively measure these technical outcomes (Cândido 2001; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

The second type of service quality dimensions “*functional*” mainly refers to the processes by which services are delivered. These dimensions are subjectively measured by both service parties (Gönroos 1984, 1990). While, service customers evaluate the three aggregated dimensions, they seem to prefer to focus upon the functional dimensions of service quality (Cândido 2001; Gönroos 1984; 1990; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml *et al.* 1990). The third type of service quality dimensions “*image*” mainly concerns with consumers’ perceptions of the service provider as organization. This image dimension depends on both technical and functional qualities such as service prices, external communications, the physical location of service providers and the competences and behaviors of service employees.

It is also noted in the literature that service quality dimensions are difficult for both customers and service providers to evaluate and measure in advance of the service consumption process because of the service characteristics mentioned earlier (intangibility, heterogeneous *etc.*). Accordingly, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), argue that understanding service quality dimensions is essential because they can provide a good insight into the criteria customers are likely to use in reaching service expectations and their perceptions, and finally which service quality dimensions service providers focus on.

The dimensions of service quality have been discussed by a number of authors; for instance, Sasser *et al.* (1978) discuss levels of personnel, facilities and material dimensions through which customers judge the service quality. According to Rosander (1989, as cited in Cândido 2001, p. 125) service quality dimensions include service safety, service price, personnel attitudes, previous experiences and service promptness. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1982) distinguish between quality process dimensions and quality output dimensions that are measured by service customers. They also argue that when examining the dimensions of service quality it is necessary to differentiate between the quality associated with the process of service delivery and the quality associated with the outcome of the service. This is a useful separation and it is taken into account when reviewing all the possible dimensions of service quality. However, Lehtinen and Lehtinen’s attempt to identify service quality dimensions



suffers from a lack of sufficient details. Accordingly, and based on an exploratory study, Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) developed 10 determinants of service quality dimensions. Table 2.3 describes these ten dimensions and provides examples.

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Definitions and Examples</b>
<b>Tangible</b>	Refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipments, personnel, and communication materials. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities available to serve customers.</li> <li>• Service employees' appearance and clothes.</li> <li>• Equipment and tools used to serve customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Reliability</b>	Refers to ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service recovery.</li> <li>• Serving correctly.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsiveness</b>	Refers to willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time to solve problems.</li> <li>• Solving all a guest's problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Competence</b>	Refers to possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the services. Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service employees skills and knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Courtesy</b>	Refers to politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of contact service personnel. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not be too busy to answer customers' questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Credibility</b>	Refers to trustworthiness, believability, honesty of the service provider Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service provider image and reputation.</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	Refers to freedom from danger, risk or doubt. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money security.</li> <li>• Building security.</li> </ul>
<b>Access</b>	Refers to approachability and ease of contact. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of talking to top managers.</li> <li>• Easiness to make telephone call.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	Refers to keeping customers informed in a language they can understand and listening to them. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating services to customers.</li> <li>• Explaining that extra service means extra cost.</li> <li>• Handling problems.</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding Customers</b>	Refers to making the effort to know customers' needs and requirements. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing regular customers.</li> <li>• Paying individual care to customers.</li> <li>• Provide specific service to specific customers.</li> </ul>

**Table 2.3 Service Quality Dimensions**  
Source: Adjusted from Zeithaml *et al.* (1990, pp. 21-22)

Based on these ten dimensions, Parasuraman *et al.* (1988) developed a 22-item measure scale called SERVQUAL<sup>7</sup> that could measure service quality. SERVQUAL has been heavily accepted and then applied in many service organizations such as banks, hotels, hospitals, insurance companies, and fast food restaurants. The original instrument involved collecting data, related to customers' expectations (E) and perceptions (P) on each service quality

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4 (p. 264).

dimension, and then calculating perceived service quality (PSQ) using the equation  $PSQ = P - E$ . During the development process of SERVQUAL, the ten-service quality dimensions were reduced to five dimensions in a suggested a new structure for SERVQUAL (see Figure 2.2). The definitions of the remaining five dimensions are as follows:

		SERVQUAL Dimensions				
		Tangibles	Reliability	Responsiveness	Assurance	Empathy
Original Ten Dimensions of Service Quality	Tangibles	■				
	Reliability		■			
	Responsiveness			■		
	Competence Courtesy Credibility Security				■	
	Access Communication Understanding Customers					■

**Figure 2.2 Breakdown Ten Service Quality Dimensions into Five**  
 Source: Zeithaml *et al.* (1990, p. 25)

**1) Service Quality-Tangibles: Representing the Service Physically**

Tangibles are defined as the physical facilities, equipment and appearance of service employees, and written materials. Service tangibles cover all the physical symbols and images of the service provider. Service tangibles are more important in high contact services such as hospitals and medical centers.

**2) Service Quality-Reliability: Delivering on Promises**

Reliability is defined as the ability to perform and provide the promised service dependably and accurately. In its broadest sense, reliability means the service provider carrying out the service it has promised: promises about delivery, service provision, problem resolution, and pricing. Service customers want service providers to keep their promises about service outcomes and attributes. For instance, in the case of mail delivery services, this means next day delivery of first class mail and delivery of the mail in good condition.

**3) Service Quality-Responsiveness: Being Willing to Help**

Responsiveness is the provider’s willingness to help customers and provide prompt services. It emphasizes attentiveness and promptness in dealing with customers’ desires, questions, complaints and inconveniences. Responsiveness is achieved by flexibility and having the ability to modify services to meet customers’ expectations and needs. For instance, in the case of tour operator services, it could be dealing quickly and effectively with accommodation problems.

**4) Service Quality-Assurance: Inspiring Trust and Confidence**

Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of providers, in particular service employees, and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. This dimension is essential when services are characterized by uncertainty and high risks. For instance, in the case of insurance services, assurance could mean having a positive reputation for settling claims.

### **5) Service Quality-Empathy: Treating Customers as Individuals**

Empathy is defined as the caring, individualized attention the service provider offers its customers. It is also about building a personal relationship with customers as individuals and this is often called personalized services. For instance, in the case of airlines services, empathy could mean giving regular updates and accurate flight information for each traveler.

The main value of each service quality dimension is determined by the nature of the service itself. For instance, in services with limited personnel contacts and little variety in standard services, such as transportation and mail delivery, the service empathy dimension will not be a significant determinant of service quality. In the case of standard services with great variety, high numbers of service employees, and short personnel contacts, such as retailing, banking the service reliability dimension is more important and significant than responsiveness (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988).

The service quality concepts and dimensions are generally reflected in the conceptual models of service quality (Grönroos 1984; Haywood-Farmer 1988; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990). These models attempt to demonstrate the relationships that exist among important variables in real service quality delivery and perception situations. Moreover, the conceptual models of service quality offer practical help to service providers in providing a direction for improving service quality and satisfying customers. In the following section, the conceptual models of service quality are discussed with an additional critical focus on and review of the conceptual gap models developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) and Zeithaml *et al.* (1988, 1990).

#### **2.2.4 Service Quality Models**

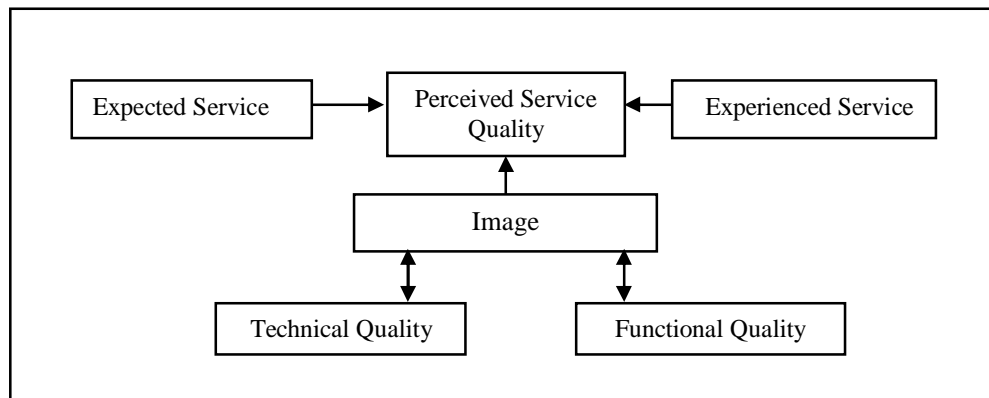
Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) argue that a service quality model requires a clear understanding of service quality concepts and dimensions. From this, conceptual models that show relationships between various service quality concepts and dimensions have been developed in order to guide service organizations/providers towards service quality improvements (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988). Seth *et al.* (2004) critically reviewed 19 service quality models and each of them is representative of a different point of view. This section discusses the most comprehensive conceptual models reported in the service quality literature, in general, and in Seth *et al.*'s work, in particular.

- **Technical and Functional Model of Service Quality (Grönroos 1984)**

Grönroos (1984) designed a conceptual model for service quality in order to provide explanations of what is called “*concept of service quality*”. Grönroos’ model depends heavily on the thought of the “*image*” dimension that influences the perceived service quality. According to this model, perceived service quality is seen as a “*gap or difference*” between the expected and perceived services. Grönroos claims that service quality concept should include what customers are seeking, what they are assessing, and how the service is delivered and perceived. Additionally, Grönroos (1984) makes a clear difference in his model between the “*technical*” and “*functional*” dimensions of service quality. The technical dimensions reflect what is delivered to service customers such as a meal in a restaurant. In other words, technical quality is the final result or outcome of the customer’s interactions with service providers or organizations. The functional dimensions reflect how the service is delivered or the way through which customer obtains the technical outcomes of services, (see Figure 2.3).

Furthermore, the functional quality is more difficult for service providers to objectively control, as it is a function of the human element in service encounters. The “*technical*” and “*functional*” dimensions are seen essential components for the “*image*” dimension, which

refers to the customer's view of the service organization/provider. If the service provider has a good or favorable image in the customers mind, then most service failures will be forgiven.



**Figure 2.3 Grönroos' Service Quality Model**

Source: Grönroos (1984, as cited in Seth *et al.* 2004, p. 916)

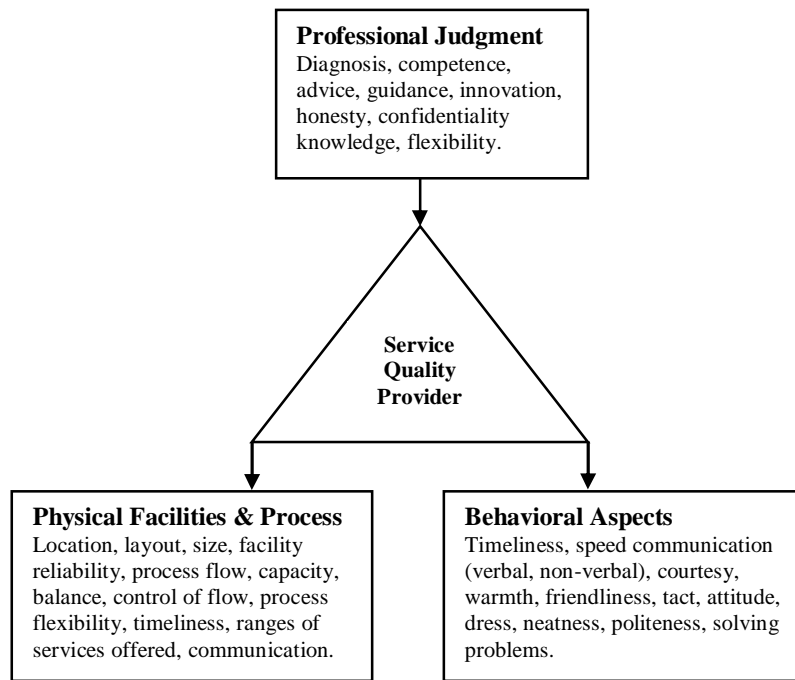
Overall, the model illustrates that perceived service quality is also determined by the difference between the expected quality and the experienced quality. Nevertheless, Grönroos' model is over simplistic because service customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality seem to be heavily influenced by different external factors, such as customers' values and cultures, customers' personal experiences and communication sources as well as the internal/organizational factors of the service providers. Furthermore, it can be argued that Grönroos' model fails to provide any instrument for measuring service quality. In other words, the model does not provide explicit clarification or an explanation of how to measure technical and functional service quality (Kang & James 2004; Seth *et al.* 2004).

- **Attribute Model of Service Quality (Haywood-Farmer 1988)**

This conceptual model of service quality assumes that service quality has the following three fundamental attributes: professional judgment; physical facilities, process & procedures; and finally people's behavior and conviviality. Each of these service quality attributes involves numerous service factors (see Figure 2.4). The model proposes that in order to achieve "high service quality" that meets customers' preferences and expectations, service providers should concentrate equally on all three attributes. Accordingly, too much concentration on one only or two of these attributes implies poor service quality. Furthermore, Haywood-Farmer (1988) sets out different types of service providers (e.g. education service providers, club service provider, healthcare service providers) based on three services features;

1. Degree of contact and interaction with service customers,
2. Degree of service employee intensity, and
3. Degree of service customization.

For instance, mail delivery services are low in terms of customization and degree of employee intensity, whereas the physical facility and process attribute in the model above is more important.



**Figure 2. 4 Attribute Service Quality Model**  
Source: Adjusted from Haywood-Farmer (1988)

The Attribute Model of service quality is helpful in terms of identifying the links between quality and operational factor, but the model does not offer a practical procedure capable of helping service providers to identify service quality problems or practical means of improving service quality. Finally, the model does not address how service quality should be measured (Ghobadian *et al.* 1994; Seth *et al.* 2004).

- **The Conceptual Gap Models of Service Quality**

The central idea in the conceptual gap models of service quality is the “*service customer gap*”. This refers to the difference between customers’ expectations and their perceptions of the actual delivered services. In general, service providers need to close or eliminate this gap in order to satisfy their customers and build long-term relationships with them. As a result, there are some elements on the service organizations side, as providers, which are essential if they are to deliver good service quality. In other words, the provider’s perceptions of customers’ expectations should be translated into service quality actions, practices, specifications, service deliveries and external communications with customers (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990). Two conceptual gap models are discussed below.

### 1) Parasuraman *et al.* Gap Model of Service Quality

The Conceptual Gap Model as created by Parasuraman and his colleagues (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985) has been seen as the “*standard*” model for service quality (Kasper 1999; Wetzels 1998). Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) give a dyad attention to service providers and customers (see Figure 2.5). The gap model was build based on an empirical study concerning both provider and customer perceptions of service quality. In doing so, the study clarified that service quality is function of five gaps: four internal gaps on the provider side and one external gap on the customer side. In providing the five gaps of service quality, the gap model also describes how service customers’ expectations are influenced by both external communications and the actual service delivery. The model also gives attention to how

customer expectations lead to changes in provider's management ways, practices and behaviors, which in turn influence the development of the service quality. Fundamentally, this model consists of two dimensions:

1. Four internal gaps as service providers' gaps (Gaps 1 to 4).
2. Perceived service quality as external gap (Gap 5).

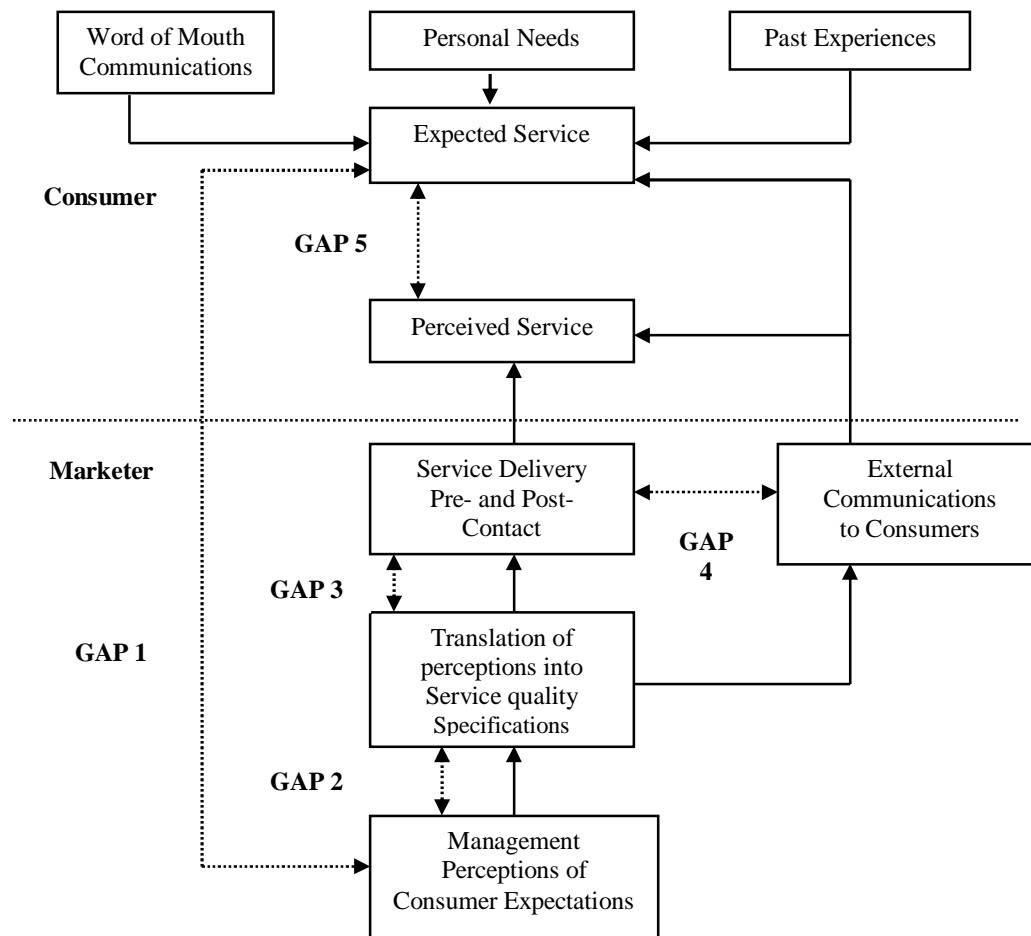
**Service Provider Gap 1 (Information Gap)** is the difference between service a customer's expectations of service and the service provider's understanding of those expectations. As a result the service provider's top managers, senior executives and service employees may not fully understand (lack of information) what aspects indicate high service quality to a customer, which aspects services must have in order to meet customer expectations and needs, and what levels of performance in terms of those features are needed in order to deliver high quality (Cândido 2001, Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990).

**Service Provider Gap 2 (Specifications Gap)** is the difference between the perceptions of the service providers as to the customers' expectations and the actual service standards and specifications that should be performed. In other words, this specifications gap is the difference between the providers' understanding of customers' expectations and development of customer-driven service specifications and standards (Cândido 2001, Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990).

**Service Provider Gap 3 (Performance Gap)** is the difference between the developed service specifications and standards and actual service performance. Even if specifications exist for performing services in a good manner and treating service customers right from first time, high-quality service performance is not certain. Service specifications must be supported and enhanced by appropriate service resources (people, systems and technology) and must also be enforced if they are to be effective. Ideally, service employees' performance should be measured and compensated along these service specifications (Cândido 2001, Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990).

**Service Provider Gap 4 (Communications Gap)** is the difference between what is promised and what the service provider is actually able to deliver for their customers. Promises made by a service provider through its advertising, sales force, and other communications may potentially raise customers' expectations to a level that serves as the standard against which customers assess service quality (Cândido 2001, Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990).

**Service Customer Gap 5 (Perceived Service Quality Gap)** is the difference between service customer's expectations and their perceptions of the delivered service. This gap is a result, or a function, of all the other four internal provider gaps (Cândido 2001, Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985). It is the manager and service employee's job to close or eliminate service quality gaps, in order to make sure that customers are received a high service quality (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1988, 1990).



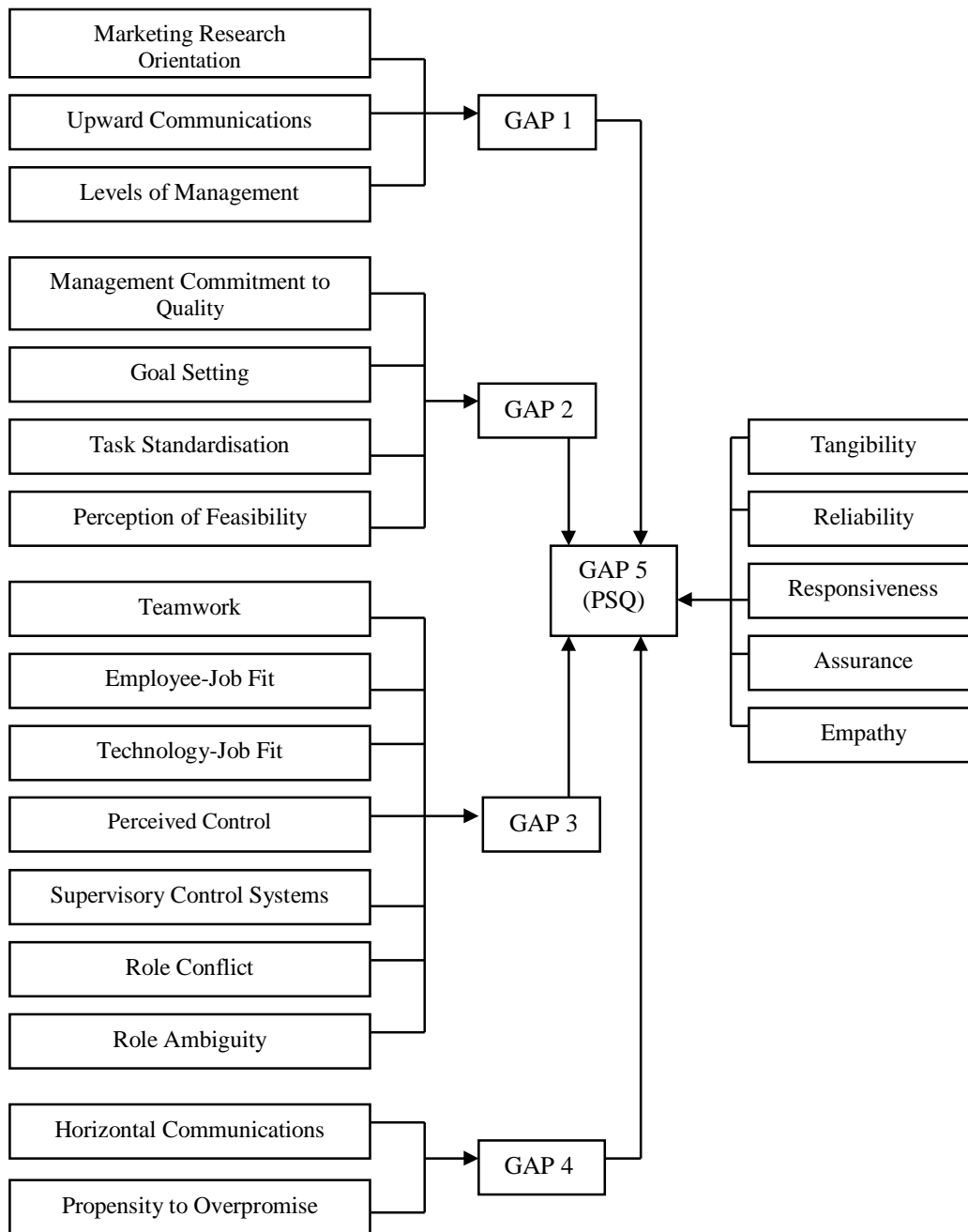
**Figure 2.5 The Conceptual Gap Model of Service Quality**

Source: Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, p. 44)

The main focus of this model is on measuring the service quality as perceived by service customers (Gap 5). Further, it can be concluded from Parasuraman *et al.* (1985, 1988) that the Conceptual Gap Model implies that service quality is a multidimensional concept as discussed earlier. The Conceptual Gaps Model has been further improved by Zeithaml *et al.* (1988) in order to link service quality gaps with both organizational and managerial theories in what is called the Extended Gaps Model.

## 2) The Extended Gaps Model of Service Quality

The original authors of the conceptual gap model proposed that the extent of the internal provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) depends on a set of organizational and managerial factors that as identified in Figure 2.6 below. These provider factors can enhance the understanding the delivered side of service quality and can also help in defining corrective actions to eliminate various provider gaps. Essentially, the Extended Gap Model ties the conceptual gap model to organizational and managerial antecedents of service quality (Cândido 2001; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988). In other words, the Extended Gaps Model links the internal service quality gaps to their organizational and managerial antecedents on the one hand and the perceived service quality on the other hand. In this view, the service customers' perceptions of the quality of perceived service are affected by four internal gaps that originate on the provider side. Therefore, service providers should focus on these critical internal gaps in order to minimize the customer gap (Gap 5), which the focus of the Extended Gaps Model.



**Figure 2. 6 The Extended Gaps Model of Service Quality**  
 Source: Zeithaml *et al.* (1988, p. 46)

In addition, the Extended Gaps Model provides the possibility for two levels of analysis: the service customers as individuals, and the service provider on the service organization level (Cândido 2001; Parasuraman *et al.* 1990; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990). Therefore, investigating the customer gap (Gap 5), for instance, depends on data collection at the individual customers' level. Similarly, examining a provider's internal gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) mostly requires data to be collected from the provider's top managers and frontline service employees, and the service quality analysis is based on the service provider/organization level.

- **Synthesized Gap Model of Service Quality (Brogowicz *et al.* 1990)**

This alternative gap model combines a traditional managerial framework, service design & operations, and marketing activities. This results in a more detailed gap analysis model with



practical implications for service providers. As a result, the authors are able to identify dimensions associated with the various gaps in service quality (Gaps 1 to 5 in Parasuraman *et al.*'s gap model) in a traditional managerial framework of planning, implementation and control. In terms of this new model, service customers expect both technical and functions dimensions and so service providers should understand what and how service customers expect these two quality dimensions to be delivered. Further, the perceived service quality gap (Gap 5) can be explicitly redefined as the difference between customers' expectations and their perception of the actually delivered service quality. In this view, the customer gap can have existed before the customer's actual experience of the services simply because the customer had learned about the services through word of mouth and advertising. The authors also argue that the internal gaps of service providers (Gaps 1 to 4) are made up of many types of specific sub-gaps that can be found within each main provider gap. For instance, there are information and feedback sub-gaps inside the first provider gap (Gap 1). Regarding Seth *et al.* (2004), the synthesized gap model offers key variables that require systematic management attention in service quality planning, implantation and strategy in order to close or eliminate the various service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 5). However, the synthesized model still needs empirical validation and it needs to be examined within different services providers in order to be generalized.

To summarize, the concepts, dimensions and models of service quality, as discussed above, present a comprehensive conceptual framework for understanding service quality. In particular, the conceptual gap models enable a dyad provider-customer conceptualizing and measuring service quality as a multidimensional construct with two major components: 1) delivered service quality and 2) perceived service quality. Further, these conceptual gap models support the idea that a situational approach towards examining service quality should be implemented in practice. Accordingly, the majority of the empirical research into service quality is based on these conceptual gap models (Parasuraman *et al.* 1985; Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml *et al.* 1988). Notably; Wetzels (1998) considers these conceptual gap models to be the most comprehensive models of service quality available to both academics and practitioners.

Nevertheless, the conceptual gap models of service quality have come in for some theoretical criticism. The critiques center on the conceptualization and measurement of service quality (Edwardsson & Gustavsson 1988; Ekinic & Riley 1998; Mattila 1999; Riddle 1992). Ekinic and Riley (1998, p. 350) state that, "*the relevance of the gap models, which have been so influential, is considered to be misplaced*". They claim that these gap models have certain cultural interrelated issues that create a circular debate. For instance, service quality measurement (Customer's Gap 5) involves a subjective judgment by service customers and this judgment is inevitably culturally influenced. In other words, when customers' expectations and perceptions are involved in measuring the customer gap (Gap 5), the reading of the service customers' minds is a matter of cultural understanding (Edwardsson & Gustavsson 1988; Ekinic & Riley 1998; Mattila 1999).

Furthermore, an underlying assumption concerning delivered service quality in the conceptual gap models is that all service providers want to perform as best as they can in order to close or eliminate the delivered service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4), whereas Rosene (2003) argues that what actually happens in closing and eliminating these internal gaps depends on the cultural background of the service providers. On the perceiving service quality side, Edwardsson and Gustavsson (1988) argue that service quality is culturally determined so service customers form their expectations based on specific national cultures and values. The authors go on to point out that customers' preferences in terms of perceived service quality are also formed by the same national cultures and values. Moreover, Ekinic and Riley (1998) argue that that national culture of service customers has an explicit influence in conceptualizing perceived service quality because this national culture and national values define the customers' preferences as well as their evaluations of perceived service quality (Gap 5).

Smith (1995) points out that determining both customers' expectations and their perceptions (Gap 5) involves cognitive processes that result from their social settings or cultural backgrounds. In addition, van Birgelen *et al.* (2002, p. 46) state that “*customer service expectations and perceptions are increasingly shaped by intercultural connectivity*”. Imrie *et al.* (2002) claim that the conceptual gap models of service quality assume that the customer gap is similar for all customers regardless their national cultural differences, and this raises a theoretical question about the validity of these gap models. The authors state that “*culture play a fundamental role in determining how customers perceive what constitutes service quality*” (Imrie *et al.* 2002, p. 11). From this, the authors concluded that the cultural aspect has consequently become a focus for increased examination when considering of the applicability of conceptual gap models to service quality.

On the delivering of service quality side, Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) argue that national culture is an important relational factor in conceptualizing and delivering service quality as it influences how service providers and their frontline service employees close and eliminate internal service quality gaps. The authors consider national culture to be an influential factor at every stage (or internal gap) of the delivery process of service quality. Further, Rosene (2003) argues that the conceptual gap model of service quality needs additional explanations based on a cultural approach and that the culture factor “*cuts across*” all the quality gaps in delivered services. Rosene (2003) considered that an additional gap needed to be added to the four internal service provider gaps. This new additional gap he called the “*complacency gap*”, or the hidden gap, caused by cultural influences that control and direct what happens in closing and eliminating these internal gaps. The novelty in Rosene's critical review of conceptual models service of quality lies in identifying the role of culture in conceptualizing and measuring delivered service quality gaps. In other words, the proposed new gap indicates a need to consider the cultural approach when trying to understand how delivered service quality gaps occur with different service providers (Imrie *et al.* 2002; Hope & Muhlemann 2001; Rosene 2003; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003).

The above critical reviews raise some interesting questions concerning service quality and the associated conceptual gap models: how is national culture theory related or linked to the service quality theory in general, and to conceptual gap models in particular? What are the specific mechanisms by which national culture affects (both perceived and delivered) service quality? Regarding to this debate, the more recent literature has begun to establish theoretical and empirical links between national culture dimensions and (perceived and delivered) service quality by investigating a subset of possibly influencing relations (Armstrong *et al.* 1997; Birgelen *et al.* 2002; Donthu & Yoo 1998; Furrer *et al.* 2000; Imrie *et al.* 2002; Linda *et al.* 2004; Winsted 1997).

According to the existing literature, there is growing evidence, which suggests that service quality theory in general, and conceptual gap models in particular, are not culture free (Armstrong *et al.* 1997; Hope & Muhlemann 2001; Hallowell *et al.* 2002; Mattlia 1997). In other words, it is now generally agreed that national culture has an influence on: 1) perceived service quality and 2) delivered service quality. However, how national culture dimensions influence perceived and delivered service quality is still open to question. Therefore, a national culture approach for examining perceived and delivered service quality, and particularly the associated gap models, seems to require theory development. To start, national culture theory is discussed in the next section.

### 2.3 National Culture Theory

This subsection is concerned with national culture theory in terms of defining culture, national culture concepts, dimensions and, finally, national cultural differences. By emphasizing the importance of these aspects of national culture theory, there is an explicit approach towards examining the relations between national culture and service quality

theories. To begin with, the notion of culture and its multilevel meanings are discussed with the aim of summarizing many of the culture elements that widely discussed in the literature. Secondly, national culture concepts and dimensions are addressed in order to build the background or cornerstones of the national culture construct used in this research. Finally, a view of national culture differences is provided. National culture differences directly challenge the global/relative validity of the organizational and managerial theories in general, and service quality theory in particular.

### **2.3.1 Defining Culture**

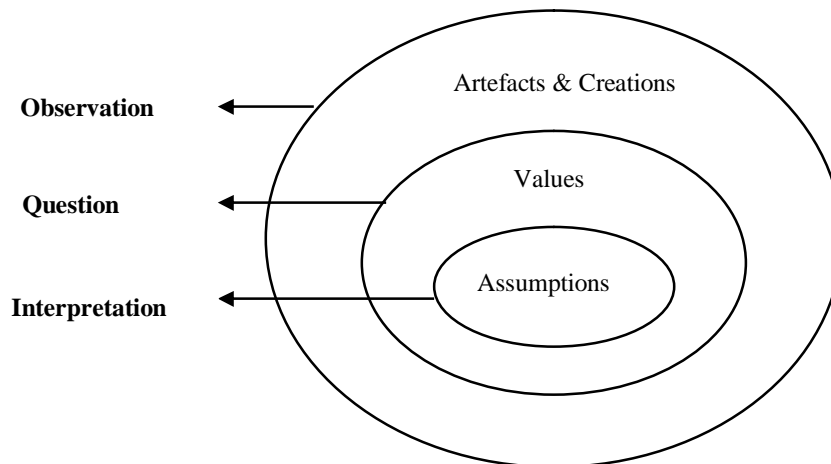
Culture <sup>8</sup> has been defined using different approaches and conceptualized across several levels. Meekanon (2002) notes that culture has been defined in different scientific disciplines, such as anthropology, ethnology, management and sociology, but without any consensus on a single culture meaning or concept. Most of the culture concepts are usually expressed in statements of specific people's values, beliefs and thinking: which are translated into apparent cultural artefacts, individual behavior and ways of acting and living (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Schein 1985; Schneider & Barsoux 1997). Further, the original cultural assumptions, which stand behind these values and beliefs, are quite hidden and not easy to recognize compared with cultural elements such as artefacts, activities and behaviors (Kekäle 1998; Schien 1985). According to Mead (1953), an American anthropologist, culture is defined as "*shared patterns of behaviour*" (cited in Schneider & Barsoux 1997, p. 19). With this definition, Mead argues that observing people's behaviors is valid for identifying cultural meaning. However, the underlying meanings, which drive these shared behaviors, are also seen as important since a common behavior can be determined from different meanings and, conversely, different behaviors can be determined by a single one meaning (Schneider & Barsoux 1997). For this reason, Geertz (1973, p. 5, cited in Schneider & Barsoux 1997) defines culture as "*systems of shared meaning or understanding*" arguing that these mutual meanings or understandings can explain how people behave and act.

As a culture scholar, Schein (1985, p. 9) defines culture as "*a pattern of basic assumptions-invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration- that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems*. He also argues that people's values and behaviors are determined by basic cultural assumptions, which are considered as the deepest level of culture meaning. Further, Schein (1985) argues that such these group problems are universal, in that any group needs to resolve them; the solutions are exclusive to a particular group. As seen by Schein (1985, p. 14), the culture concept has three levels: first, artefacts and creations (i.e. arts, technologies, behavior patterns...) that are observable but not fully understandable. Second, values that concern what ought to be, as distinct from what is; and thirdly, the basic assumptions. As a result, investigating as well as measuring culture should be involved a combination of these three levels in order to provide a clear view of what culture really means (Kekäle 1998; Schein 1985; Schneider & Barsoux 1997).

Furthermore, Schein's approach is considered as a "*cognitive approach*" by nature as it sets up culture as a system of underlying assumptions as values, as behaviors and as artefacts. Accordingly, culture can be recognized and understood by the following methodological sequence: what is observed and seen (i.e. artefacts, behaviors...) should be questioned (i.e. values...) and finally interpreted (the underpinning assumptions), and this requires various research techniques and tools such as observations, questionnaires and interviews and finally interpretations (see Figure 2.7).

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<sup>8</sup> Cartwright (1999, p. 4) states that "*the origin of the term "culture" derives from Latin; and refers to the cultivation of the soil. It literally means to grow, to produce and, most significantly, to cultivate or improve the mind through learning*".



**Figure 2.7 Levels of Culture Meaning**  
Based on Schein' Studies (1985)

The practical relevance of Schein's approach is that it directly addresses the key culture meanings that effect any organization, as a group of people, in doing and enacting its internal and external business processes such as finding solutions for problems of external adaptation, such as developing competition strategies, and solutions to problems of internal integration such as designing structure, managing style and determining the internal practices. These solutions- strategies, policies, structures, and organizational practices and tactics - are thus deeply embedded in a culture's shared meanings, and will therefore differ from one group to another (Kekäle 1998; Schein 1985; Schneider & Barsoux 1997).

To conclude, the various definitions of culture can be taken to represent a continuum along which different culture approaches can be discovered and examined. In other words, the influence of culture on business organizations in general, and on service organizations in particular, can be examined and explained on several levels. These culture levels of influence interact in complex ways that limit the relevance of simple prescriptions for service or manufacturing business in any country. As a result, one would like to be able to recognize and assess the relevant culture level for the desired purpose. Culture can be uncovered and examined on many levels such as; nation cultures (i.e. Western countries and Eastern countries), regional cultures within nations (i.e. urban versus rural), industry cultures (i.e. services versus manufacturing goods) and corporate cultures and subcultures (i.e. functional groups).

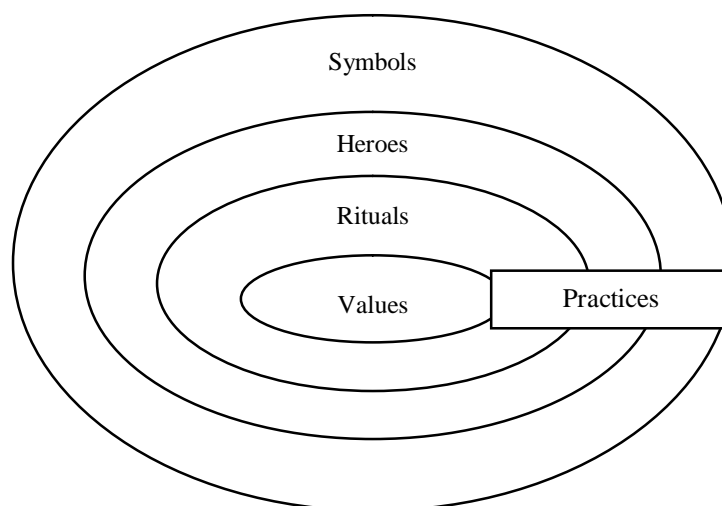
What is important is determining which level or approach to culture is relevant for the research in hand. Based on the objective in this research, it can be strongly argued that national culture is the dominant level in the current investigation. National culture has a direct bearing on countries' economies and organizations. Moreover, as national culture is to nations, so it is to organizations in these countries (Erez & Early 1993; Hofstede 1980, 1991; Trompenaars 1993). Many attempts have been made in the literature to simplify national culture theory. Drawing on this work, the following sections explicitly tackle aspects of national culture theory: national culture concept, national culture dimensions, and national culture differences.

### **2.3.2 National Culture Concept**

The national culture concept has been defined in several ways using different approaches (Crotts & Erdmann 2000; Erez & Early 1993; Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Trompenaars 1993). For instance, Trompenaars (1993) argues that the national culture concept can be defined as "*a set of implicit logical assumptions that enable people of [a] nation to organize themselves in*

order to increase the effectiveness of their problem solving processes”. According to Trompenaars’ definition, each national culture distinguishes itself from others by its solutions to common problems; such as relational problems with nature, relations to time, and how people relate to each other (Smith, *et al.* 1996; Trompenaars 1993). These common problems can also be used as a classification to differentiate between national cultures. Moreover, Erez and Early (1993, p. 20) define national culture as “*shared values of a particular group of people or individuals of one nation or country*”. Accordingly, national culture reflects the shared values and beliefs that were formed and acquired during the people’s lives. Furthermore, the authors strongly argue that national culture shape the norms, thinking, attitudes and behaviors of people in any country. In addition, Fukuyama (1995) considers national culture as an “*inherited ethical habit*” (cited in Morden 1999, p. 20). An ethical habit can contain a collective idea or value, or common relationship patterns. These ideas, values and relationship patterns always form the ethical human codes by which people and individuals in societies and countries regulate their thinking, attitudes, activities and behaviors (Fukuyama 1995; Morden 1999).

Hofstede (1980, 1991) concludes that the core of the national culture concept is formed by the deeply embedded “*people values*” (see Figure 2.8). It can be understood this that values are preferred states about the way things should be and about ideals<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the values that are held by individuals or by members of a collective group are the conceptions of what is desirable among people and, at the same time, they refer to the personality traits and cultural characteristics of those people and their societies. Based on a social anthropology perspective, Hofstede (1991, p.5) first defines the culture phenomenon as “*the collective programming of the human mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another*”. The main focus of Hofstede’s definition is the original human process; how people think, feel and finally act. Furthermore, Hofstede (1980, 1984, 1991) attempts to identify the national culture concept through a “*comparative approach*”. This rational approach is basically built on determining the national differences in cultural values among different countries. Based on this view, Hofstede (1980) built up his “*National Culture Model*” from a large-scale investigation involving 116,000 questionnaires distributed within the global IBM Corporation in 53 countries in the 1970s.



**Figure 2.8 The Core Manifestation of National Culture Concept**  
 Source: Hofstede (1991, p. 9)

<sup>9</sup> In order to interpret the people value statements, Hofstede (1991) distinguishes between two value-interpreting aspects “*desirable and desired*” in terms of how people generally think about how the world should be vs. what they want for themselves. He concludes that both the desirable and the desired aspects together can explain the actual behaviors of people (Hofstede 1991, p. 10).

Hofstede (1980, 1991) claims that cultural differences reside in people's values since people organize themselves differently to increase the effectiveness of their problem-solving processes. Furthermore, each group of people distinguish themselves from others through their solutions to basic societal problems. On this basis, Hofstede's studies provide the following definition of national culture concept: "*national culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the inhabitants of one country from another. Basic beliefs and values are acquired early in life, through socialization and education and this way inhabitants of a country come to share certain basic assumptions and the tendency to prefer certain state of affairs over others*" (Hofstede 1991). Hofstede is thus suggesting that people share a collective national character, one which represents their cultural mental programming. This mental programming shapes the values, attitudes, competences, behaviors, and perceptions of priority of that nationality (Hofstede 1980, 1991). Hofstede's view seems to reflect both the differences and the degree of the difference of culture together. In this view, national culture is the difference perceived by one group when it comes into contact with, and observes, another group.

To conclude, national culture is a collective phenomenon that is shared by a group of people who have the similar values, beliefs and norms within one country or nation (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Schneider & Barsoux 1997). The national culture influences the activities and behaviors of the people of any country and makes them different from others. For this reason, national cultural difference is seen as a disintegrated notion of the national culture concept, one which reflects the diversities of the values, norms, attitudes, activities and behaviors among groups within country. Specific descriptions of these cultural differences are usually based on national culture dimensions.

### 2.3.3 National Culture Dimensions

As mentioned above in defining the culture concept, there is a common belief in the literature that all societies and collective groups face the same basic problems but that the answers or solutions to these problems differ from one society or group to another (Erez & Early 1993; Morden 1999; Hofstede 1980, 1991; Schein 1985; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Schwartz 1994; Trompenaars 1993). The key question now is, what are these common basic problems? Hofstede (1991, p. 14) summarizes the areas of these basic problems as follows:

1. *The social inequality including the relationship with authority.*
2. *The relationship between the individual and society.*
3. *The social implications of having been born as a boy or girl.*
4. *Ways of dealing with uncertainty, relating to the control of aggression and the expression of emotions.*
5. *The relationships to confusion dynamism.*

Furthermore, Hofstede (1991) argues that these basic problem areas represent the "**dimensions of national culture**". He (p. 14) defines culture a dimension as "*an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures*". In addition, he identifies these dimensions as: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism versus individualism, masculinity versus femininity, and finally long versus short-term orientation (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Hofstede & Bond 1988). According to Hofstede's Culture Model, national culture can be explicitly explained using these five dimensions: **1) Power Distance** is the extent to which the members of any social group in a country (e.g. families, schools, institutions, organizations...) expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Power in this definition means the ability to determine the behavior of the other members rather than vice versa and limit the behavioral options of those members (Hofstede, 1980, 1984b, 1991). **2) Uncertainty Avoidance** is the extent to which the members of any group in a country feel comfortable with uncertainty or unknown situations. This culture dimension can be expressed through stress and the need for predictability among the members of the society (Hofstede

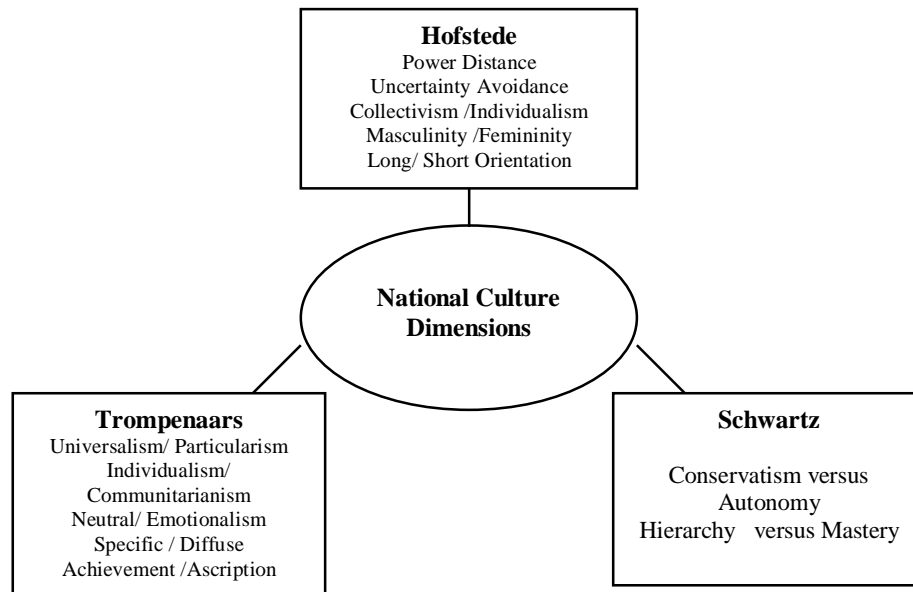
1980, 1984b, 1991). **3) Individualism versus Collectivism** is the extent to which the members of any social group in a country or society identify themselves as either an individual or a member of the group. It refers to the relationship between the interests of the individuals and the interests of the group (Hofstede, 1984b, 1991). **4) Masculinity versus Femininity** is the extent to which the members of any social group in a country (i.e. family, school, organization *etc.*) are oriented towards either the role of men or women (Hofstede 1991, 2001). **5) Long- versus Short-Term Orientation** is the extent to which the individuals in any social group in a country are oriented towards either short-term or long-term goals on a *Confucian* principle. In other words, the extent to which society members accept a delaying in their gratification and satisfaction of their physical, social and emotional needs and wants (Bond & Hofstede 1988; Hofstede 1991).

In addition, Hall and Hall (1990) differentiate between a high and a low context communication culture as a distinct dimension of national culture. The communication context as a culture dimension is defined in terms of how the individuals of a country and their society seek information and knowledge. The authors argue that people from high context cultures get information from personal information networks, and as a result, such people become well informed before they make any decision or organize a deal. Conversely, people from low context cultures seek information about decisions and deals from a research base. Whilst they will listen to the views of peers and colleagues, they place much more emphasis on the use of written reports and data sources (Hall & Hall 1990).

The work of Schwartz (1994) addresses the “*etic*” dimensions of national culture and proposes two dimensions for national cultures: the first, **Conservatism versus Autonomy**, is the extent to which society views the individual as an autonomous entity or as embedded in a social group. Conservatism is found in countries where values such as harmony and propriety in person-to-group relationships are highly valued. Conservatism reflects national cultures where people are looked upon as entities embedded in the collectivity (Schwartz 1994; Steenkamp 2001). Importance is given in such national conservatism cultures maintaining the personnel status, respectability and controlling actions that might disturb the harmony of a group. Autonomy reflects national cultures in which people are seen and considered as autonomous, and people can express their own internal attributes. This Schwartz’s culture dimension reflects Hofstede’s Collectivism versus Individualism dimension.

The second, **Hierarchy versus Mastery** examines whose interests within a country or society take priority (i.e. those of the individual or those of the group). Hierarchy addresses wealth, social power, and authority. Mastery reflects national values such as being independent, ambitious, successful and choosing one’s own goals. This dimension concerns with the use of power to promote individual versus group interests. Trompenaars (1993, 1994) has also examined the dimensions of national culture. His research approach in determining national culture dimensions is quite similar to Hofstede’s. Trompenaars identifies five national culture dimensions that address how people relate in the workplace.

These dimensions are: **1) Universalism versus Particularism**, **2) Individualism versus Communitarianism**, **3) Neutral versus Emotionalism**, **4) Specific versus Diffuse**, and **5) Achievement versus Ascription**. Figure 2.9 illustrates the key dimensions of national culture as discussed in this section.



**Figure 2. 9 Key National Culture Dimensions**

From the discussions above, one can see that national culture dimensions have been defined in many ways and from different perspectives. Ignoring the operationalization of these dimensions, all the existing literature reaches the conclusion that national culture is a multi-dimensional construct and that these dimensions can explain the differences among people's values, beliefs, thinking, attitudes, activities and behaviors in different countries and nations. In addition, understanding the main dimensions of national culture enables one to question (observe and interpret) the underlying reasons for differences between countries. In the next section, national culture differences are more explicitly addressed.

### 2.3.4 National Culture Differences

In general, there are many factors that shape cultural differences including nationality, language, education, profession, religion, gender, and social class (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Usunier 1996). Further, Hofstede (1991, p.10) makes clear that a person can be part of many groups and categories at the same time and, as a result, people seem to retain multilevel mental programs reflecting these different culture layers. He sees these culture layers as:

- *Nation (i.e. countries)*
- *Region (i.e. ethnic, religious, linguist, language...)*
- *Gender (i.e. male or female)*
- *Generation (i.e. grandparents, parents and children)*
- *Social Class (i.e. education level, person occupation or profession)*
- *Corporate or organization (i.e. work organization)*

On the nation level, the existing literature on national culture offers a number of explanations for the culture differences that extend beyond the existence of borders (Erez & Early 1993; Hall & Hall 1990; Hofstede 1980, 1991; Morden 1999; Schneider & Barsoux 1997; Schwartz 1994; Trompenaars 1993, 1994). This literature has sought to examine the extent to which people of dissimilar countries differ in terms of national culture dimensions. For instance Hall and Hall (1990) differentiate between high and low communication context cultures (see Table 2.4). People from high context cultures get their information from personal networks such as work, professional colleagues, family friends, relatives, personal friends and acquaintances, social gossip and rumors. In this way, such people become well informed



about the facts associated with a subject before they make any decision or organize a deal. Conversely, people from low context cultures seek information from a research base such as close team members, internal reports, databases, or information systems. People from low context cultures also put great emphasis on the use of reading, reports and data sources (Hall & Hall 1990). Hall and Hall (1990) rank more than 30 countries on a high and low context scale in order to describe differences in national cultures among those countries.

<p><b>High Context</b>                  Japanese                  Chinese                  Italians, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Mediterranean people                  Latin American                  Arabs, Africans                  Indians and other Indian sub-countries                  Koreans, South East Asians                  Central European                  Slavs                  Other American cultures                  British, Australian                  Scandinavians, Finns                  North Americans                  New Zealanders                  Germans, Swiss, Austrian  <b>Low Context</b></p>	
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**Table 2.4 A Suggested High-Low Context Ranking**

Source: Hall and Hall (1990)

Similarly, Hofstede (1991) positions 50 various countries by their score on each of the five national culture dimensions in this Culture Model (see an example in Table 2.5). By doing so, Hofstede (1991) distinguishes between: large and small power distance countries, strong and weak uncertainty avoidance countries, individualism and collectivism countries, femininity and masculinity countries and finally long and short term orientation countries. The scores for each country on each dimension can be pictured as points along a continuum. In another approach to illustrate national culture differences, Hofstede sets out a typology that describes three categories of countries: First, Second and Third World. While the country typologies are easier to grasp than the dimension scores, these typologies are quite difficult and problematic in practical investigations. In reality, countries seldom fit within one idealized typology (Hofstede 1980, 1991).

Country	Power Distance Index	Uncertainty Avoidance Index	Individualism Index	Masculinity Index
Austria	11	70	55	79
Egypt	80	68	38	53
Netherlands	38	53	80	14
USA	40	46	91	62

**Table 2.5 National Culture Differences in some Countries**

Source: Hofstede (1991)

The difference between large and small power distance cultures is related to the way through which the people of the society form and develop their interpersonal relationships. In other words, the power distance index (PDI) indicates the extent to which people of a society accept the fact that power in families, institutions and organizations *etc.* is distributed unequally. It is also reflected in the values of the less powerful members and also those of the more powerful ones. In large power distance countries there is a psychological need by the less powerful

people to depend on the more powerful members, for example the dependence of subordinates on their supervisors/bosses in organizations. In small power distance cultures, there is less dependence by less powerful society members on the more powerful ones. The emotional distance between the two parties is relatively small and, as a result, the interpersonal relationships between the less and more powerful society members are participative and egalitarian.

Similarly, the difference between strong and weak uncertainty avoidance cultures indicates the extent to which people of a society feel threatened by ambiguous and uncertain situations and how they try to avoid these situations by greater career stability, emphasis on formal rules, clear structures and accepting absolute truths. In countries with strong uncertainty avoidance, people are looking for predictable situations and events. They are also characterized by a tendency to protect themselves from the unpredictability of human behavior by formal laws. In countries with weak uncertainty avoidance, people will tend to be more relaxed about their life and be less risk-averse. There is a lower sense of urgency and stress. Furthermore, people in such cultures feel relatively secure and so accept both familiar and unfamiliar risks.

To conclude, the frameworks proposed for national culture differences presented in the literature reflect a critical research issue when wanting to examine and explain the effects of national culture on organizational and managerial theories in general, and service quality theory in particular (Imrie *et al.* 2002; Hope & Muhlemann 2001; Rosene 2003; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). In addition, the effects of national culture differences on marketing, organizational and managerial practices regarding service quality have also attracted attention in literature that tries to link national culture to service quality theories. In the following section, this literature linking national culture and service quality theories is addressed.

### **2.4 The Link between Service Quality and National Culture**

In the following literature discussion, the main objective is to identify the extent to which the existing literature theoretically and empirically establishes links between national culture and service quality (perceived and delivered). There are two criteria against which this reviewed literature should be evaluated: 1) whether theoretical and empirical literature on the influences of national culture on service quality exists, and if so; 2) whether this literature satisfactory explains how national culture affect service quality. In other words, to what extent does the existing literature provide an underlying framework for explaining the mechanisms by which culture dimensions affect service quality. From this, one can determine to what extent the existing literature has theoretically and empirically succeeded in explaining the effects of national culture on service quality and what major elements seem to be missing from the existing literature. The discussion will be divided into main two parts considering perceived and delivered service quality respectively.

#### **2.4.1 Perceived Service Quality and National Culture**

In focusing on marketing literature, one finds a vast number of theoretical and empirical studies that link national culture to perceived service quality (Armstrong *et al.* 1997; Birgelen *et al.* 2002; Donthu & Yoo 1998; Furrer *et al.* 2000; Linda *et al.* 2004; Winsted 1997). One of the questions the marketing literature has researched is “*how does the customer’s national culture affect perceived service quality?*”. In answering this question, one would have to first determine what the influences of national culture on perceived service quality are, and then discover how national culture affects perceived service quality in order to explain the mechanisms by which national culture dimensions affect perceived service quality (Furrer *et al.* 2000; Mattila 1999; Winsted 1997).

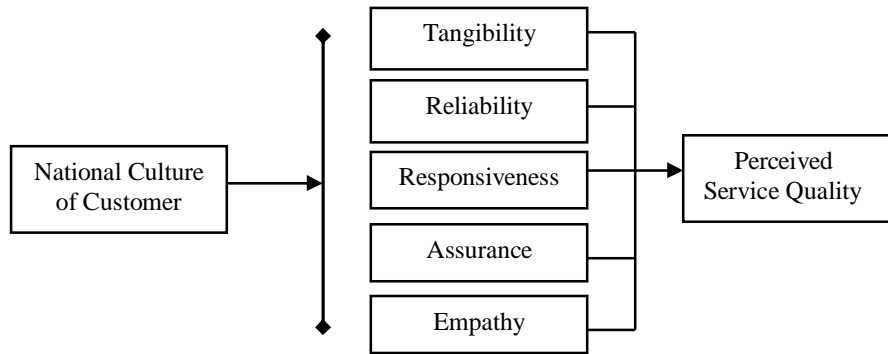
Starting with the literature that focuses on cultural influences on perceived service quality, there seems to be a strong agreement that national culture influences how customers anticipate and perceive service quality (Mattila 1999; Furrer *et al.* 2000). This literature shows links between various cultural dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism, and perceived service quality dimensions, such as tangibles, assurance, and reliability. For example, Mattila (1999) provides theoretical and empirical evidence that customers with Western cultural backgrounds are more likely to rely on tangible cues of service quality when evaluating service quality than their Asian counterparts.

Donthu and Yoo (1998) note that customers, who have low power distance culture backgrounds, expect service quality to be more responsive and reliable. Furrer *et al.* (2000) also illustrate how customers with masculine and large power distance culture backgrounds rely on service quality tangibles rather than service quality empathy. This area of the literatures shows that customers from different national culture backgrounds have different service quality expectations and perceptions. Further, various national culture dimensions influence the service quality dimensions. Also, the majority of this literature conceptualizes and operationalizes national culture-service quality relationships at the individual level rather than at the culture or societal level (Furrer *et al.* 2000; Mattila 1999; Winsted 1997).

The literature that focuses on how culture affects perceived service quality and through which influencing mechanisms is built on the premise that service quality subjectively depends on customer's values and beliefs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990). For instance, in their explanations of how national culture influences service quality, Furrer *et al.* (2000) identify the main determinants of perceived service quality as the customers' personal needs i.e. physical, social and psychological aspects. Such, customers' personal needs are strongly formed by the social and cultural background of customers.

Finally, in this discussion Furrer *et al.* (2000) conclude that the cultural influences on service quality can be strongly explained by the psychological and cognitive sides of the customers as the main influencing mechanisms. Similarly, Mattila (1999) argues that the psychological and personal emotional sides of customers represent the main mechanisms in explaining how national culture influences service quality. More recently, Mattila and Patterson (2004) see social psychology aspects as the main explanation for how national culture influences service quality and, in particular, customers' perceptions. Ueltschy *et al.* (2004) apply a social judgment perspective in explaining how national culture influences service quality as perceived by customers. The authors found that the psychological ethnicity of service customers could explain the national cultural influences on perceived service quality. Winsted (1997) and Van Birgelen *et al.* (2002) pursued additional directions in explaining cultural influences on perceived service quality. These two empirical studies provided behavioral explanations for the national cultural influences on perceived service quality.

To conclude, as discussed above, the existing literature suggests that the national culture of the customers has a significant influence on perceived service quality. The existing literature firstly depicts the possible influences of national culture on customers' perceptions of service quality, and secondly, qualifies the psychological, cognitive and behavioral mechanisms by which these cultural influences can be explained. Most of the culture - perceived service quality mechanisms uncovered relate to the individual level of analysis (Mattila 1999). Overall, the existing literature provides sufficient theoretical and empirical studies on how national culture affects perceived service quality. In this respect, it seems that the existing literature meets the previous criteria for its evaluation. This conclusion is based on the view that the ideas and models of perceived service quality have been extensively examined in diverse national culture contexts. By doing so, the existing literature offers conceptual frameworks as well as models that have been empirically tested that explain the relationships between the two constructs (see Figure 2.10).



**Figure 2.10 Underlying Conceptual Framework as used by the Reviewed Literature**  
Developed by the author based on Laroche *et al.* (2004, p. 68)

Further, some recent studies provide new tools that benefit from such explained relationships between national culture and perceived service quality. For example, Furrer *et al.* (2000) offer a Culture- Perceived Service Quality index based on integrating the SERVQUAL dimensions (developed by Parasuraman *et al.* 1985, 1988) and national culture dimensions developed by Hofstede's studies (1980, 1991).

#### 2.4.2 Delivered Service Quality and National Culture

A range of perspectives has been considered in the literature on national culture influences on delivered service quality (Aaker 2000, Hope 2004; Hope & Muhlemann 1997, 1998a, 2001; Kufidu & Vouzas 1998; McLaughlin & Fitzsimmons 1996; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). The existing literature is too diverse to devise consistent story but there are common conclusions that national culture affects delivered service quality, and in particular organizational and managerial aspects. In the notable work by Zeithaml & Bitner (2003, p. 49), the authors make clear that national culture is an important influencing factor in delivered services because: "*it, national culture, influences how companies and their service employees interact with customers*". They conclude that an explanation of how this factor affects delivered service quality is needed, especially since values and practices differ across countries. Hope and Muhlemann (1997) empathize the fact that service operations are bound by national culture within service providers.

Hendry (1994, p.106) points out that national culture influences the human resource aspects of the service delivery process. Shih and Gurani (1997, p. 16) state that "*certainty, culture plays a key role in shaping all quality activities*", and discuss the influences of culture on managerial aspects of quality based on a comparable study between USA and Japan. McGaughey and De Cieri (1999) consider that individualism, as a cultural dimension should lead to financial reward system that encourages service quality within service organizations. Trigg and Trigg (1995) conclude in their study that national culture influences the success of the service delivery system. Hickson and Pugh (1995) report that in Eastern collectivism cultures, such as in India, the selection rules for service employees can be broken based on who you know rather than meeting the required criterion for efficient service quality delivery. McLaughlin and Fitzsimmons (1996) illustrate how service quality strategies should be adapted, based on the existing culture background, and argue that "*cultural adaptation is a major service quality design issue*" (p. 51).

To conclude, the existing literature has shown that the national culture of service providers does influence delivered service quality but the literature fails to provide theoretical and empirical descriptions of the mechanisms through which national culture dimensions affect the delivered service quality. These missing explanations of national culture-service quality relations should be built based on theoretical and empirical descriptions. In this area, it seems

that the existing literature meets only the first criterion of the evaluation. That is, the research for this thesis needs to examine various variables/constructions with which one could view the facets of delivered service quality in order to identify one that will facilitate an explanation of the effects of national culture. This gap in the literature supports the development of a generic preliminary explanatory structure or construction with which one could examine the relations between national culture and delivered service quality more comprehensively.

## **2.5 The Research Perspective: New Model That Links Service Quality and National Culture**

Although providing a comprehensive framework for the relations between national culture and (perceived and delivered) service quality would be an interesting device for explaining the effects of national culture on service quality, this is not the intention of this research. Firstly, a complete framework goes beyond the main objective of this research (build a preliminary explanatory model in the hotel sector). Secondly, involving the service provider and the customers and their national cultures, in such a framework is very complicated from both theoretical and empirical point of views. Although, the reviewed literature does show significant influences of the national cultures of both service customers and providers on (perceived and delivered) service quality, the existing literature does not offer any explanations as to how the national culture of the service provider affects the delivered service quality.

Given this situation, and finite time, the research perspective focuses on the effects of the national culture of the service provider on delivered service quality. That is, the research choice is to provide a preliminary explanatory construction, in terms of building a new model that fills the gaps in the existing literature. In other words, the aimed for model will integrate national culture and delivered service quality into one construction that shows the mechanisms through which national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter serves as a theoretical setting that establishes the first foundations for investigating the effects of national culture on service quality in the hotel sector. The service quality and national culture theories discussed present some useful concepts and models that help in providing an appropriate explanation of how national culture affects service quality. However, because the mechanisms through which national culture dimensions affect service quality are insufficiently clear, most of the existing literature misses certain elements in explaining which dimensions of national culture affect delivered service quality. Thus, the main research focus, or objective, is to uncover and conceptualize these missing mechanisms.

Empirical observations from the hotel sector, a sector clearly subjected to national culture influences on service quality, will help to determine the missing mechanisms and add to the existing literature of service quality and national culture. Empirical observations require a specific research methodology, and Chapter 3 presents the methodological choices made in this research.

## Chapter 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

As discussed earlier in Chapters 1 and 2, the research objective is to build a new model that can preliminarily explain national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. Initially, this research is in the form of a qualitative investigation as it is the construction of a new model to preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality. Since the research model is based on two existing theories (service quality and national culture), the research is considered to be “*theory construction*” rather than “*grounded theory*” (Eisenhardt 1989; Moreno Bragado 2003; Strauss & Corbin 1998). The question of how to methodologically carry out this type of theory construction is discussed in this chapter.

The chapter starts with establishing a methodological foundation for conducting this research. In Section 3.2, a theory construction is presented that can be used as a methodological foundation for the research. The theory construction, as presented by Muller (1999), makes use of two methodological cycles: a “*design cycle*” and an “*empirical cycle*”. Section 3.3 deals with the model construction in terms of the “*design cycle*”<sup>10</sup> where theoretical and empirical investigations are carried out to construct the desired model. In this way, the *design cycle* enables one to find preliminary explanations for the national culture - service quality relations based on both theoretical and empirical evidence. Section 3.3 also presents the modeling process used in this research.

The case study approach as the main research strategy for collecting empirical evidence is presented in Section 3.4. Embedded multiple-case studies are appropriate given the theoretical and empirical criteria for building the new research model. The data-gathering process is also discussed in this section. Section 3.5 explains the “*grounded theory*” tools used in this research to analyze the empirical data and evidences collected from the four hotel case studies. Finally, Section 3.6 summarizes this chapter.

### 3.2 Methodological Foundation of the Research

Ideally an investigation should depend on a reliable methodology that has a successful track record with similar research problems. In this research, a methodology is defined as a set of methods, procedures and techniques that should be followed and employed in carrying out the theoretical and empirical investigations as an iterative process in order to ground the developed model (Strauss & Corbin 1998). Many research methods exist for a researcher to choose from in order to solve his/her research problem and achieve the research objectives. The most basic distinction between methods is whether they are quantitative or qualitative (Babbie 1992; Creswell 1994).

Quantitative methods were initially developed in the natural sciences to facilitate the investigation of natural phenomena such as physical relationships. Babbie (1992, p. 23) defines a quantitative method as “*the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect*”. Quantitative research is linked to the notion of science as “*objective truth*”. Quantitative research often begins with pre-specified objectives and a hypothesis, and focuses on empirical testing. Common methods include surveys, and laboratory experiments.

Qualitative methods were initially developed in the social sciences to facilitate the investigation of social and cultural phenomena and they are constructivist and interpretive in

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<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that, in this methodological cycle, the term “*design*” refers to the construction of the model not testing it (see page 41).

nature. Qualitative research usually begins with an open-ended observation and analysis, most often looking for patterns and processes that could explain the “*how and why*” questions within the holistic reality of the research problem domain. Qualitative methods include case studies, action research and ethnography. Further, qualitative methods suggest several techniques for gathering qualitative data such as observation, qualitative interview, questionnaire, researcher impressions and reactions.

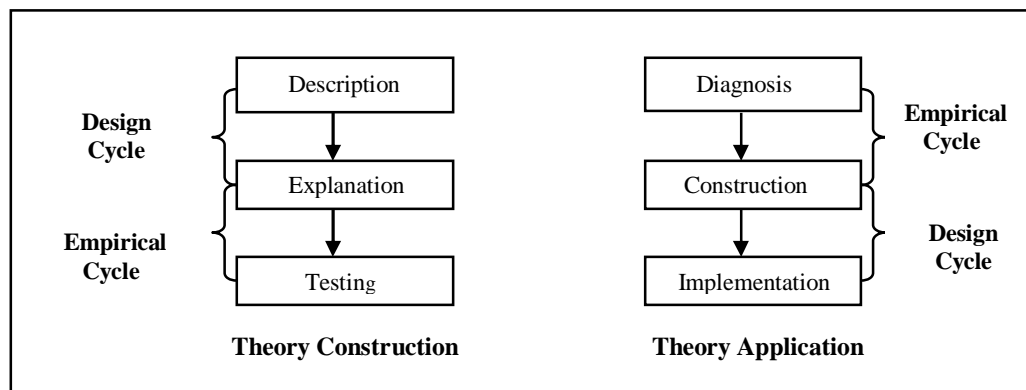
Because both the above methods have advantages and disadvantages for investigating socioeconomic problems, researchers have proposed the use of combined methods involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Meredith 1998). Notably, Moreno Bragado (2003, p. 32) observes that given the advantages and disadvantages of both methods, that it is “*difficult to find the perfect method*”. The selection of qualitative, quantitative or a combined method should mainly be based on the characteristics of the research problem under investigation, so every investigation is controlled by its research problem and questions and these determine whether the inquiry needs a qualitative, quantitative or combined method (Creswell 1994).

Further, Van der Zwaan (1995, cited in Moreno Bragado 2003, p. 33) points out four different research types based on the theoretical character relevant to the investigation of a particular research problem or topic:

- *Exploratory research: in this type of investigation, there is little theory on the topic. In this situation, the research aims to find new theoretical idea to complement existing ones.*
- *Descriptive research: there is theory on the topic. These ideas provide the research approach for analyzing the research problem without any new theoretical findings but with validation of existing theories.*
- *Explanatory research: there is theory on the topic but it is insufficient and research is necessary in order to complement these theories.*
- *Test research: there is a sufficient theoretical base for the research. Using these theories, a hypothesis will be formulated and tested. Such research needs a more quantitative approach for formulating and testing of the hypothesis (cited in Moreno Bragado 2003, p. 33).*

The current research has characteristics of more than one of the above four research types. The research has descriptive and explanatory aspects because service quality and national culture theories already exist but are insufficient to explain the research problem area; “*how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector*”. A straightforward description of the research problem using these two theories does not lead to any new findings or contribute to knowledge. Thus, it would be very difficult to use only these two unlinked theories to explain how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. In this regard, it is very unlikely that the research problem can be completely solved by testing only service quality or national culture theory. As a result, this research is neither theory testing, pure descriptive research nor completely explanatory research. The current research is a “*theory construction*” in terms of building a new model using a qualitative methodological choice as opposed to “*theory application*” (see Figure 3.1).

Muller (1999) makes a distinction between “*theory construction*” and “*theory application*” depending on the steps followed in every trajectory or trial. The theory construction trail contains description, explanation and testing steps; whereas the trail of theory application contains diagnosis, construction and implementation steps as illustrated in Figure 3.1. Thus, the approach in this current investigation is seen as theory construction.



**Figure 3.1 Trajectories of Theory Construction and Application**

Source: Muller (1999, p. 60)

In this research, the theory construction is represented in terms of building a new explanatory model of national culture – service quality relations. This model includes two of the earlier Van der Zwaan’s research classification types labeled description and explanation. The basic objective is explanatory: to preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality. To achieve this ; theoretical descriptions as well as empirical descriptions are needed. For this reason, the research focuses only on the first two steps of the “*theory construction*” trajectory, or what is called “*design cycle*”, as suggested by Muller (1999) and Moreno Bragado (2003).

More explicitly, the model construction begins with definitions of service quality concepts and models and of national culture concepts and dimensions, which provide a theoretical description of the research problem. While, this theoretical description attempts to provide new explanations for how national culture affects service quality, it will not be sufficient to reach preliminary explanations. To achieve this, there is a need to introduce empirical evidence. In other words, it is necessary to introduce empirical descriptions or observations from real hotel situations. From the outcome of these empirical observations, preliminary explanations could be added to the scientific knowledge. This new body of knowledge may give rise to a new trail for improving the model or may be used in an existing trial to test the newly constructed model (Moreno Bragado 2003; Muller 1999, Van der Zwaan 1995).

To conclude, this qualitative research aims at building a new model that can preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. To achieve this, the *current* research is limited to the trajectory or trail of theory construction and further to its “*design cycle*” part (sees Figure 3.1). The derived model will represent a new theoretical insight because it will provide new conceptual links that can explain how a certain national culture dimension is related to a certain service quality element/gap. In the next section, the “*design cycle*” is explained, that is how the “*design cycle*” has been applied to the task of building a new model of national culture - service quality relations.

### 3.3 Model Construction

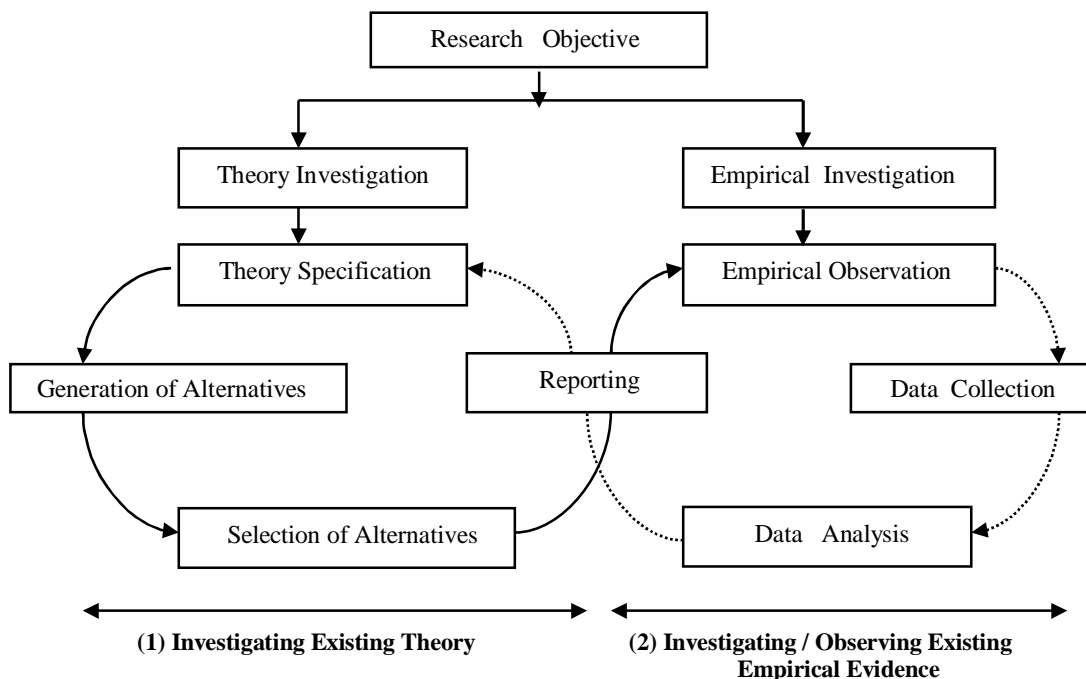
Model building is the research choice made for searching for national culture - service quality relations in order to help in improving service quality in the hotel sector. This choice of employing a modeling technique was essentially influenced by the existing literature gap in service quality and national culture research (see Chapter 2). Given this situation, this section deals with model construction in terms of the design cycle and the modeling process employed in this research.



### 3.3.1 The Design Cycle <sup>11</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the final research model is built using the trail of theory construction, and this implies that the model is built, and then improved based on iterations involving both theoretical and empirical investigations (Figure 3.2). The model construction process to reach the final research model first needs to investigate the existing theories of service quality and national culture and, secondly, to consider empirical evidence and observations in real hotel situations. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the first theoretical iteration starts by taking into account the research objective: “building a model of national culture - service quality relations” in the hotel sector.

The second step is to investigate service quality and national culture theories. From these two theories, one model of service quality and another of national culture have been selected as applicable theories for explaining the effects of national culture on service quality in hotels (as will be discussed in Chapter 4). However, these two unlinked models are not sufficient to provide new insights, or new model, that can preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality and help in improving service quality in the hotel sector (the theory specifications: the desired outcome). In other words, how national values and beliefs affect the extent of each service quality element/gap. There are two possibilities to achieve that the desired theory specifications; firstly a model that links the national culture of hotel guests and perceived service quality; secondly a model that the links national culture of the hotel provider and delivered service quality (i.e. the generation of the alternatives).



**Figure 3.2 The Design Cycle of the Model Construction**

Source: Adopted from Moreno Bragado (2003, p. 34)

According to Muller (1999), the generation of the alternatives is either an organized process of evaluating existing solutions, an innovative process of creating new solutions, or a combination of both. In this research, the design stage is seen as evaluating two existing solutions for explaining how national culture affects service quality. In the theoretical investigation, there are two principal alternatives/solutions: *1*) the hotel provider’s perspective, and *2*) the hotel guests’ perspective.

<sup>11</sup> This section addresses the “design cycle” as defined by Moreno Bragado (2003).

The hotel provider perspective is selected since this can fulfill the new theory specification. The reporting stage refers to the form of the designed model and what the model design looks like, for instance it could be a systematic model, a scale model, or a prototype model. In this research, a prototype model of the hotel provider’s national culture and delivered service quality could represent the final model by describing the relations among national culture dimensions and service quality elements. The prototype model is expressed in the form of prototype matrix scheme for the expected mechanisms that describe how each cultural dimension affects the extent of each element of delivered service quality (Chapter 4).

The prototype mode is developed on theoretical grounds and therefore it should be confronted with empirical evidence and observations. Therefore, the prototype model of national culture - service quality relations will be evaluated using empirical observations based on extensive data collection and analysis from different national hotel providers (Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers: Chapters 5 and 6). In doing so, the data analysis will improve the specification of that prototype model through another “*design cycle*” and reach an improved and then eventually the final model (as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7).

### 3.3.2 Modeling Process

Firstly a prototype model will be built which can form the initial foundation of the final model. By analyzing service quality and national culture theories, as well as the empirical situation in the hotel sector, the prototype model is offered in terms of a matrix schema that consists of the delivered service quality elements and the national culture dimensions as illustrated in Figure 3.3. In addition, all possible relations between these national culture - service quality elements are included in the prototype model. This building process results in a model with empty cells that reflect all possible relations in the prototype model between national culture and service quality. The prototype model is identified by the notion M0.

National Culture Dimensions (1.....N)	Service Quality Elements (1.....N)			
	1	2	3	N
1				
2				
3				
N				

Figure 3.3 Prototype Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations (M0)

The process of building the prototype model involved two main model functions: Firstly, providing mechanisms by which each national culture dimension affects each service quality elements. That is, finding out and conceptualizing the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension related each service quality element or gap. Secondly, gaining some insights that could help to improve service quality in the hotel sector. The prototype model (M0) will be evaluated using four hotel case studies in order to complete the model scheme or fill the empty model cells. The model M0 is evaluated with the first pair of hotel providers (one Egyptian and one Dutch) as illustrated in Figure 3.4. The purpose of this first round empirical investigation is to gather empirical evidence of the actual practices and behaviors related to delivered service quality, as well as the national culture values and believes in two distinct hotel providers.

The main reason for choosing the Egyptian and Dutch cases is the notable differences in their culture dimensions (Hofstede 1991). This allows the model to be evaluated in two very different national culture situations. From this, a more developed model is reached, denoted

by the symbol M1. That is, the empty cells in the prototype model (M0) are partially filled in the model M1 with mechanisms that can to an extent describe the relations between national culture and service quality.

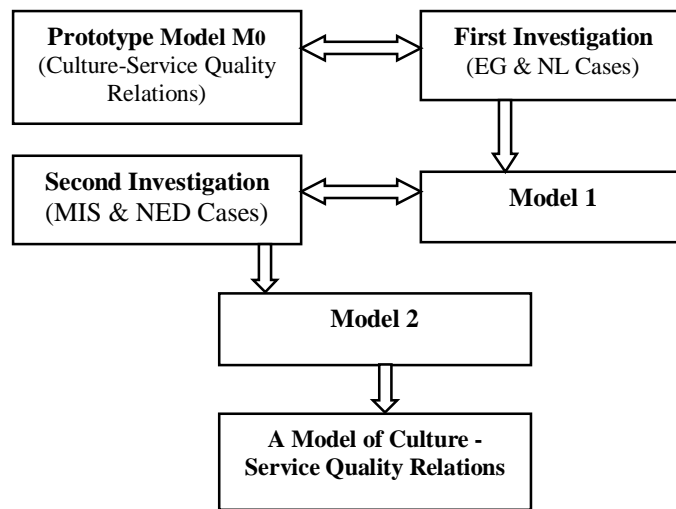


Figure 3.4 The Modeling Process

EG: First Egyptian Hotel Case  
 NL: First Dutch Hotel Case

MIS: Second Egyptian Hotel Case  
 NED: Second Dutch Hotel Case

Then, taking model M1 and a second pair of hotel provider case studies, the filling-in process for the empty cells is again followed and the filled cells in model M0 are emphasized and empty ones filled in. this adds more details to the model M1 resulting in the final model M2. The data collected in this second empirical investigation improved the earlier data from the first investigation and enabled the final research model to be completed.

### 3.4 The Empirical Evidence: Multiple Case Study Research

This research employs the case study approach as the main research strategy in carrying out the empirical investigation. Case study research is the most commonly applied qualitative, positivist method in social research (Yin 1994). Yin (1994, p. 13) defined case study research as follows: “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. Further, the case study research is recommended when the researcher has little control over the investigated events. That is, when the research environment cannot be completely controlled by the investigator. In general, this strategy is frequently implemented to bring out empirical facts and details from the viewpoint of the case participants from multiple sources (instruments) of evidence and empirical data using a triangulation approach involving some combination; interviews, direct observations, participant observations and documents. Here, the empirical evidence for the model building starts with a discussion on the choice of case study research and this is followed by the data analysis tools.

#### 3.4.1 Conducting the Hotel Case Studies

In this constructive investigation, the main research question seeks to build an explanatory model of culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. Since the exiting theories of service quality and national culture cannot explain the effects of national culture on service quality, the new model is considered as a new theoretical contribution that can link these two theories together. As a result, the case study approach in this research is seen as a data collection strategy for theory construction/building and not for theory testing. Eisenhardt

(1989) notes that the objective of building theory from case study research is to assess the soundness of the new theory by focusing on analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. Furthermore, he makes it clear that, “*researchers, in theory building research, cannot apply statistical tests*” (p. 544).

Overall, there are three specific types of case studies: *Exploratory*, *Explanatory* and *Descriptive* (Yin 1993): *Exploratory case studies* are seen as an introduction to more detailed social research. In exploratory case studies, fieldwork and data collection may be undertaken prior to defining the research questions. In other words, the research framework has to be created once one is underway. Pilot projects are, in this respect, very useful in determining the final protocols that will be used. *Explanatory case studies* are suitable for doing causal studies. In very complex and multivariate situations, the analysis can make use of pattern-matching techniques as a useful technique for linking data to propositions. In other words, this type of case study aims to uncover relationships between variables, and investigates how and why the variables are related. *Descriptive case studies* require the researcher to start with a descriptive theory. Indeed, what is implied in this type of case studies is the formation of cause–effect relationships. This type of case study is often used to ascertain real situations, events and facts, and not to test theory.

The descriptive type of case study is adopted in this research since the real hotel situations have a national culture intervention, which the research seeks to describe and finally find preliminary explanations for, with the objective of helping to improve the delivered service quality. This research uses descriptive cases as they can describe what happen in the reality of delivering service quality within different hotel providers. The case studies will describe four important service quality elements or entities and the cultural influences that affect them. These elements are the service quality gaps. Further, the cultural influences include the affect of each national culture dimension on each of the service quality elements.

#### 3.4.2 Hotel Case Selection

In general, case study research can be classified along two criteria that reflect two different design situations. First, a differential criterion exists between single and multiple case studies. Single cases are used to confirm, challenge or refute a theory, or to represent a unique or extreme case. Moreover, single cases are invaluable for a revelatory situation where a researcher may have access to a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible (Yin 1994). Conversely, multiple case studies are used to collect more robust empirical evidence. A researcher needs to select a number of appropriate with the selection based on some criteria related to the phenomenon under investigation.

In the current research, the multiple case study approach was adopted. The following choices were made to fulfill the research method requirements. **1)** Multiple hotel cases (two Egyptian and two Dutch) were selected based on theoretical and empirical reasons (theoretical and empirical sampling) not statistical ones. The hotels were chosen to fit the new model building specifications regarding three theoretical and empirical characteristics: a) hotels are owned, operated and managed by local staff/hoteliars (managers and employees); b) hotels reflect two different national culture contexts (Egyptian and Dutch); c) hotels are in the luxury category and serve local as well as international guests. By ensuring this, the new model can be extended to a broad range of luxury hotels. **2)** Hotel top managers, middle managers/supervisors, and frontline service employees must be involved in the interviews since the multiple case study design used in this research will then allow one to take advantage of flexible data collection and analysis approaches.

The second differential criterion refers to holistic and embedded case studies. This differentiation indicates whether the case study focuses on one or more sub-units of analysis. Regarding the present main research question and objective, the unit of analysis in this

research is the hotel provider. Inside this unit of analysis, the empirical evidence will focus on the practical and behavioral aspects of how Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers deal with (close/eliminate) the various elements (*gaps*) of service quality. Consequently, the sub units of analysis are the actual service quality behaviors and practices adopted by the hotel provider members (managers and service employees) in order to close such provider gaps. The sub-units of analysis in this research are not the perceptions or expectations of the hotel managers and service employees but the sub-phases (behaviors and practices) of the delivered service quality in the hotel provider.

Given these two case selection elements, four hotel provider case studies were conducted in Egypt and the Netherlands between January 2005 and September 2006. The first pair of case studies took the form of a “*first empirical investigation/round*” in order to evaluate the prototype model M0, of this research (see Chapter 5). The second pair were used in the “*second empirical investigation/round*” in order to develop a more complete model (see in Chapter 6).

### **3.4.3 Data Collection**<sup>12</sup>

Yin (1994) characterizes three principles for data collection in case study research: using multiple sources of empirical evidence, creating a case study database, and ensuring the chain of observed evidence. The use of multiple sources of empirical evidence involves data being collected from two or more sources but then coming together to reflect the same set of facts. Usually the empirical data used in case studies comes from one of six sources: interviews, direct observations, documents, archival records, participant observations, and physical artefacts (Yin 1994). The case study data are normally presented in a case study report as a database. The case study database is defined as the formal construction of the observed evidence. The database includes case study notes, case study documents and tabulated material. Maintaining a chain of evidence is important in explicitly linking the research question, the collected data, the data analysis, and the conclusions. For this reason, case study research being called a triangulated research strategy.

Following Moreno Bragado (2003), Muller (1999), and Yin (1994), it can be concluded that case study triangulation, or corroboration, can occur with data, investigators, theories and even methodologies. Data triangulation occurs when the researcher looks for the data to remain the same in different contexts. Investigator triangulation occurs when several researchers examine the same phenomenon. Theory triangulation occurs when researchers use different viewpoints to interpret the same results. Methodologically, triangulation occurs when others follow different approaches in order to increase confidence in the interpretation. This research especially uses multiple sources of data, collected from interviews, direct observations and documents. The main sources of data are the interviews with both hotel managers (top and middle) and frontline service employees. Well-prepared question guidelines were used during each interview, and all interactions were carried out in English language. The use of the English language was not a problem because a high level of English competence is required in both centuries' luxury hotel sector.

## **3.5 Grounded Theory for Data Analysis**

Given that the research aims at theory construction in terms of building a new model that presents preliminary explanations of national culture – service quality relations, grounded theory analysis in the form of a “*coding*” analysis is used to deal with the collected empirical data and evidence. Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 3) define the “*coding*”<sup>13</sup> process as “*the*

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<sup>12</sup> See the complete case study protocol (Appendix 2, p. 253).

<sup>13</sup> Simply, coding term refers to a qualitative research procedure by which the researcher can interpret and organize the collected data.

*analytical process through which data are fractured, conceptualized and integrated to form theory*". The authors summarize the purposes of coding procedures as follows:

1. *Build rather than test theory.*
2. *Provide researchers with analytical tools for handling masses of raw data.*
3. *Help analysts to consider.*
4. *Be systematic and creative simultaneously.*
5. *Identify, develop, and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory.*  
(Strauss & Corbin 1998, p. 13)

There are two types of coding techniques: *Open Coding* and *Axial Coding*. Strauss and Corbin (1998) describe *Open Coding* as an analysis procedure that puts the research phenomenon under investigation into categories, and argue that this analysis process should happen and immediately started when the researcher conducts the empirical cases and the required data (Moreno Bragado 2003; Strauss & Corbin 1998). In more detail, this process aims to find empirical patterns, within the empirical field, that form concepts/ categories for describing the phenomenon under investigation. On other hand, *Axial Coding* is defined as an analysis procedure that establishes relationships and connections between the categories of the phenomenon under investigation. Further, this analysis procedure relates every major category with its subcategories. In doing so, axial coding analysis can be considered as an integrated stage of open coding analysis (Moreno Bragado 2003; Strauss and Corbin 1998). In view of this, Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 102) state that "*without this first analytical step, open coding; the rest of the analysis and the communication that follows could not occur*".

In the current research, the main research phenomenon under investigation is how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. The research phenomenon is also apparent in the difficulty and complexity of delivering better quality service in the hotel sector because of the effects of national culture. One of main problems related to this observed phenomenon is the lack of explanations as to how the local national culture of service providers affects delivered service quality. To make this problem researchable, the specific research question is expressed as how to model the national culture and service quality relations in order to find out and conceptualize new mechanisms and help to improve service quality in the hotel sector.

From review of the existing literature on service quality and national culture, dimensions were found that would stand for this research phenomenon and problem. These dimensions or categories are defined as gaps in the delivered service quality and national culture dimensions. From this, the modeling problem can become more specific: how to build a new model that can integrate national culture dimensions and delivered service quality gaps in order to determine and conceptualize the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension affects each service quality gap. In applying the open coding technique, the above categories were used to empirically describe the real situations found in the four hotel case studies. In other words, during the interviews and the data collection, the main focus was on looking for empirical patterns of how each hotel provider's members deal with (close/eliminates) service quality gaps and how those members of each hotel provider identify the various national culture dimensions.

These collected descriptions, which came from the four hotel case studies, give the possibility of using axial coding to relate the main national culture and service quality categories. Furthermore, the axial coding creates the possibility of comparing data gathered from the different hotel cases and discovering patterns among them. Axial coding enables the collected data and empirical evidence to be reassembled through statements concerning the nature of relationships among the various categories. By doing so, new preliminary explanations are explored alongside the main categories. The new preliminary explanations reflect the targeted

mechanisms through which each of the culture and service quality categories relate to the others.

### **3. 6 Summary**

In carrying out this research into a specific area and find answers to the research question, it is essential that an appropriate research methodology is designed and then implemented. This chapter determined the research methodology by explaining the method of model construction in terms of the design cycle and the modeling process. The chapter noted that the “*design cycle*”, as introduced by Moreno Bragado (2003), would enable one to find preliminary explanations for the national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector based on both theoretical and empirical evidence. Further, the research strategy for collecting empirical evidences was explicitly addressed in this chapter. Embedded multiple-case studies were selected in response to the theoretical criteria for building the model. The data-gathering process has also been discussed.

Finally, the chapter explains the “*grounded theory*” tools in terms of the open coding and axial coding used in this research for analyze the empirical data and evidence. Based on this methodological chapter, the following chapter will proceed with more detailed descriptions of the modeling process. It begins by with searching for a prototype model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. The prototype model links national culture and service quality theories in one schema.

## Chapter 4. A Prototype Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations

### 4.1 Introduction

The main objective of this research is to build a model of national culture - service quality relations. As discussed in previous chapters, the main function of the model is to preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality. In order to build the model, mechanisms that describe how each dimension of national culture affects each element of service quality should be developed and conceptualized within the model. By doing so, the model aims to provide new insights that could help hotel managers and service employees to improve service quality. The need to build such model was based on theoretical and empirical findings from the existing literature and from observations within the hotel sector (see Chapters 1 and 2). It was concluded that such a model would not only be desirable to fill a gap in the service quality and national culture literature but also that it would be a beneficial construction for luxury hotel providers (managers and service employees) in order to improve the delivered service quality in their hotels.

The modeling approach that is discussed in this research in general, and in this chapter in particular, partly follows the framework proposed by Pidd (1996), which includes the way of thinking, the way of modeling and, finally, the way of working. In this research, the focus is on the way of modeling. According to Pidd (1996), the way of modeling describes the different types of models that are designed during the modeling process. Pidd (1996) addresses different types of models such as simulation models, systematic models, and explanatory models. In this research, the aim is to build a preliminary explanatory model, and one which is rooted in the relational thinking approach. This type of thinking considers the direct relations (links) between two, and only two, constructs or variables. It also tries to provide descriptions and explanations concerning these relations (Angyal 1941; Moreno Bragado 2003; Emery 1969; Kraijenbrink 2006; Pidd 1996). In Section, the way of modeling is discussed in depth starting with definition the term “*model*”, and then addressing the different types of models with a focus on explanatory models.

In order to build a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations, a prototype model (M0) should first be created. The prototype model is the first step towards the final model. Here, this prototype model relies partly on the theoretical models of service quality and national culture. Because service quality and national culture constructs are defined and modeled using various approaches (Chapter 2), one has to choose a single theoretical model for each construct in order to build the prototype model. Section 4.3 addresses the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988) and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1980, 1991) as the main theoretical models selected for building the prototype model. Section 4.4 uses these two models to create a prototype model of the hotel reality. In using these two proven models as a research framework, the five service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 5: information gap 1, specifications gap 2, performance gap 3...) and the five national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism...) are relevant to the prototype model. Note, however, the inclusion of all five service quality gaps and all five national culture dimensions is not the aim in creating the prototype model.

There are two main perspectives that could be followed in order to create such prototype model: 1) the hotel guest perspective, and 2) the hotel provider perspective. The hotel provider perspective is chosen in Section 4.5 and the prototype model (M0) includes the four service provider gaps (service quality gaps) and four dimensions of national culture that are linked in a matrix schema. In Section 4.6, the operationalization of the prototype model (M0) is discussed. Finally, a summary of this chapter is presented in Section 4.7.



## 4.2 A Way of Modeling (Pidd 1996) in the Hotel Sector

- **Defining the Term “Model”**

There are several definitions of “model” including many definitions within management science. For instance, Ackoff and Sasieni (1968, as cited in Pidd 1996, p. 13) define a “model” as “a representation of reality”. This definition is quite simple as it does not explain why a model is developed and built. Accordingly, Pidd (1996, pp. 14-15) defines the term “model” as “a representation of part of reality as seen by the people who wish to use it to understand, to change, to manage and control that part of reality <sup>14</sup>”. This definition considers a model to be an explicit or external tool that can be used in order to identify, change or manage a part of what happens in reality. Moreover, this definition also assumes that the reality exists in a complex or multifaceted form, and is partly implicit. As a result, a successful model should make explicit or concrete whatever aspect of reality is being investigated and focused upon. Pidd (1996) sees differences between the reality and the model as shown in the Table 4.1. The model provides an explicit explanation of something without any of the unnecessary aspects of the reality. In fact, if a model includes all the aspects and elements of the reality, it will be as complex as the reality itself.

Reality	Model
Complex Subtle Ill-defined	Simple Concrete Fully defined

**Table 4.1 Reality versus Model**

Source: Pidd (1996, p. 18)

How can a model completely describe and explain what happens when people from different national cultures interact with each other? Such as the interaction between an American hotel guest and an Egyptian hotel employee at the reception desk after this guest, without any notification, has been moved to another hotel room; or when the guest discovers that his personal items have been placed around the new room in almost the identical positions to where he had first put these items. Such a situation, there are multifaceted national culture – service quality related aspects or variables that could be involved. One culture-related aspect here is that in Western cultures or societies, moves are associated with status - the lowest ranking individual is the one who moved. Another culture - related variable is the significance of space.

Being quite territorial, Westerners want to ensure that a move does not involve moving to a smaller space (Hall 1976). From the other side, and from an Egyptian cultural view, when guests enter the hotel they become part of a family. As a member of the family, the hotel managers and service employees feel that the guest can be quietly moved if a need arises. This example also illustrates that building a model of the national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector should be based on representing only a part of the reality, as seen by the modeler and model users, because complex models are too difficult to build and cannot possibly include the full complexity of real hotel situations.

In this research, the overall aim is to build a new model of national culture - service quality relations. This model could help in improving service quality in the hotel sector, but it should not be overlooked that service quality improvements also have complexities linked to the effects of national culture. For instance, national culture involves a set of national assumptions, values and beliefs that form the people’s mind-set or what Hofstede (1991) calls

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<sup>14</sup> Pidd (1996) uses the term “reality” to represent the real world being modeled.

the “*software of the mind*”. This causes people to carry implicit mental forms, which are in some situations (such as improving hotel service quality) challenged by other people who carry different mental forms. The question is: are the service quality improvements aimed at an implicit or explicit level?

The answer is that the service quality improvements should be carried out at an explicit level if they are to help the hotel providers, and in particular hotel managers and frontline service employees, to deliver high quality within their hotels. Based on this, the need is for an explicit model rather than an implicit model. In fact, it is quite difficult to even accept that the hotel providers, or even the hotel guests, are looking for service quality improvements based on building a new mental model, for example, one that tries implicitly to explain how to control, manage and improve what happens when American guests simply look for the same amenities in hotels as they are used to in their home country. This suggests that building an implicit mental model is not useful because others (i.e. the hotel guests) will continuously challenge this kind of model.

- **Different Types of Models**

There are different types of models reflecting the way of thinking followed in designing and building them. For instance, Pidd (1996) makes a distinction between two different approaches to model building: *1) soft approaches* and *2) hard approaches*. Within soft approaches, the final modeling aim is to generate debates and insights about the reality. In other words, the main modeling concern is to understand what actually exists in reality not to explain why and how it exists. Models built by these soft approaches allow the model users to learn how to deal with new ways and insights. One example of these soft approaches is the building of systematic models. Conversely, within hard approaches, the final modeling aim is to represent the reality and explain why and how it exists. In other words, the models built using these hard approaches reflect parts of real world. It is accepted that models are simplifications and abstracts of the real world, but the models do provide some recommendations and guidelines for the users to deal with specific situations. One example of such hard approaches is the building of theoretical models.

Angyal (1941, as cited in Kraijenbrink 2006, p. 4) distinguishes between two different ways of thinking that are the roots of different types of models: *1) relational thinking* and *2) systematic thinking*. Relational thinking refers to knowing the direct connection between two, and only two, objects. The main aim is to explain the relationships between these two objects. Such relational thinking is used in building explanatory models. Systematic thinking refers to finding a system or structure in which two or more objects can be connected. Systematic thinking also aims to understand the positional value of these objects relative to the system. Systemic thinking is used to build systemic models

In terms of the ways of modeling proposed by Pidd (1996), the model created in this research is a working theory that tries to partly, or preliminarily, explain what has been observed to occur in the hotel reality. In other words, the model is a theoretical representation of real hotel situations. The model also provides preliminary explanations on how national culture affects service quality in the daily hotel reality. In order to reach these preliminary explanations, a prototype model has to be first built. Pidd (1996, p. 97) states that: “*models should, ideally, be developed gradually, starting with simple assumptions*”. Within the context of Pidd’s modeling approach, it is important to see a prototype model as a first-step model that is not perfect but one that can be refined and improved into a more developed model (Moreno Bragado 2003; Pidd 1996; Powell 1995).

The next section presents the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988) and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1980, 1984, 1991) and discusses how these two models can be applied in order to reach and build a prototype model (M0) of national culture -

service quality relations. At this stage, the main aim is to offer a theoretical schematic model that to an extent represents how national culture affects service quality in the hotel reality. Empirical evidence will be needed to fill-in and advance this prototype schema towards an improved model.

### **4.3 Theoretical Basis for the Prototype Model**

The prototype model of national culture - service quality relations should be built on theoretical foundations from both service quality and national culture theories. These foundations should also offer practical means and empirical descriptions for the model variables that are involved in order to firstly, create the model and, secondly, to evaluate it. The Extended Gaps Model of service quality (developed by Zeithaml *et al.* 1988) was selected, as it seems usable from both theoretical as well as practical aspects for building the prototype model. As discussed earlier (see Chapter 2, p. 23-24), the Extended Gaps Model links many managerial antecedents with the various service quality gaps in a dyad approach. At the practical level, the Extended Gaps Model enables an empirical investigation to gather data and descriptions from different service quality actors such as hotel managers, hotel employees and guests. Moreover, the Extended Gaps Model design identifies different levels of analysis: *1)* individual respondents as hotel guests and *2)* the organizational entity as hotel provider. The Extended Gaps Model is further discussed in Section 4.3.1.

Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1984, 1991) can also provide theoretical as well as practical bases for the investigation of national culture dimensions. According to Hofstede's Culture Model, national culture has five dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long versus short-term orientation. Hofstede (1984) developed his model from a large-scale comparative survey. This survey is considered a seminal work in the field of international management. Although the Hofstede Culture Model has recovered some criticisms or theoretical concerns, the model does successfully indicate what may happen in the any organizational context driven by national values and beliefs. Hofstede's Culture Model is further discussed in Section 4.3.2.

In the following subsections the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede's Culture Model are discussed in more detail as the theoretical basis for building the prototype model in this research.

#### **4.3.1 The Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml et al. 1988)**

The gap approach was firstly developed by Parasuraman *et al.* (1985), from which frameworks such customer gap, and provider gaps were formulated. From this, Zeithaml *et al.* (1988) built the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (see also Chapter 2, pp. 23-24). The gap perspective on service quality is adapted in this research in order to build a prototype model of national culture - service quality relations. In this perspective, service quality is defined as "*the outcome of an evaluation process, where the services customers judge the overall excellence or superiority of actual delivered services*" (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988). As Zeithaml *et al.* emphasize, service quality is a multidimensional construct that is divided into: *1)* perceived service quality and *2)* delivered service quality. Service quality is seen as a function of five provider-customer gaps. Then external customer gap (Gap 5) is related to the perceived service quality and the four internal provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) are related to the delivered service quality.

As illustrated in Figure 2.6 (Page 24), the Extended Gaps Model consists of the five customer-provider gaps and the antecedents of each gap. Five antecedents related to the customer external gap (Gap 5) have been identified as: *1)* service quality tangibility, *2)*

reliability, 3) responsiveness, 4) assurance and 5) empathy. Further, sixteen managerial<sup>15</sup> antecedents related to provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) have been identified as: For the first provider gap (Gap 1), there are three antecedents: 1) marketing research orientation, 2) upward communications, and 3) levels of management. For the second provider gap (Gap 2), there are four antecedents: 1) management commitment to quality, 2) goal setting, 3) task standardization, and 4) perception of feasibility. For the third provider gap (Gap 3), there are seven antecedents: 1) teamwork, 2) employee- job fit, 3) technology- job fit, 4) perceived control, 5) supervisory control systems, 6) role conflict, and 7) role ambiguity. For the fourth provider gap (Gap 4), there are two antecedents: 1) horizontal communications and 2) propensity overpromise.

As made clear by Zeithaml *et al.* (1990), the main objective of the Extended Gaps Model is to establish a provider-customer dyad approach within which the customers perceive service quality, and the providers deliver and improve this service quality. The model is explanatory as it explains how customers (as individuals) perceive and measure the service quality and how service providers (as organizations) deliver and improve the service quality. Given this, Wetzels (1998) characterized the Extended Gaps Model by its simplicity, the relationships between internal antecedents and perceived service quality, and used the SERVQUAL measurement tool for assessing perceived service quality. However, the gap analysis approach found in the Extended Gaps Model gives rise to some theoretical concerns. For instance, on the customer gap level (Gap 5), the Extended Gaps Model is based on relative measurements of perceived service quality. This means that service quality will be perceived as high when customer expectations are met or exceeded (Wetzels 1998; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). One consequence of this is that customers who have different national culture backgrounds will have different expectations and hence perceptions (Armstrong *et al.* 1997, Mattila 1999). The effects of national culture should therefore be brought into the Extended Gaps Model.

The concern is that, the *Extended Gaps Model* assumes that the extent of the perceived service quality gap is the same regardless of the national culture of service customers and this raises theoretical questions about the validity of the Extended Gaps Model (Ekinci & Riley 1998). In response, Imrie *et al.* (2002, p.10) state that a gap analysis of service quality should consider “*the possible influence of the variety of cultures found in international markets*”. Turning to the provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4), the Extended Gaps Model assumes that service providers will perform as well as they can in order to close and eliminate internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) although all these gaps will continue. Further, it is assumed that service providers strive for perfection according to service quality specifications and standards. However, Rosene (2003) argues that this assumption of the Extended Gaps Model can be challenged based on the cultural issues clammung that culture cuts across all the provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). As a result, not all service providers perform as well as they could in closing and eliminating service quality gaps. Similarly, Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) accept that culture influences how service providers close and eliminate internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). There is seen to be a need to uncover the effects of national culture on each of the internal provider gaps described in the Extended Gaps Model in order to improve the theoretical validity of the Extended Gaps Model.

Overall for this research, the Extended Gaps Model is both theoretically and empirically relevant and will be used in modeling the national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector reality in terms of potential service quality improvements (Gaps 1 to 4). The Extended Gap Model presents service quality as a function of five multidimensional gaps (Gaps 1 to 5) concerning perceived service quality (Gap 5) that refers to the final outcome of the service, and, delivered service quality (Gaps 1 to 4) that refers to the service process.

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<sup>15</sup> Zeithaml *et al.* (1990, p. 130) use the term organizational and managerial antecedents with a single meaning. For brevity, the term managerial will be used in this research.

Further, the model provides a theoretical and empirical opportunity to examine the antecedents of service quality gaps on both customer (as individuals) and provider (as organizations) sides.

### **4.3.2 Hofstede's Culture Model (Hofstede 1991)**

The national culture model developed by Hofstede (1991) is adapted in this research as part of building the prototype model of national culture - service quality relations. In this model, national culture is defined as follows; *“national culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the inhabitants of one country from another. Basic beliefs and values are acquired early in life, through socialization and education and the way inhabitants of a country come to share certain basic assumptions and the tendency to prefer certain state of affairs over others* (Hofstede 1991). According to this model, national culture can be expressed in terms of five dimensions: *1) power distance, 2) uncertainty avoidance, 3) individualism versus collectivism, 4) masculinity versus femininity, and 5) long versus short term orientation.*

Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture has been frequently applied in different cultural backgrounds and contexts (Meekanon 2002). However, there remain some theoretical concerns about this model. For instance, the definition of the long- versus short-term orientation dimension is insufficiently conceptualized. According to Meekanon (2002), a *“Confucian”* dimension would represent the cultural situation and context more explicitly. Further, Meekanon (2002) claims that the conceptualization concerns create possibilities for adjusting Hofstede's model with additional dimensions for national culture in the future.

Another theoretical concern is that there are many countries that were not involved in Hofstede's survey and this leads to some national culture dimensions being correlated with each other. As a result, there is a need to further examine each national culture dimension independently in each country (Johnson & Lenartowicz 1998; Meekanon 2002). In addition, Hofstede's model overlooks the influences of *“intra-culture”* dissimilarity or the differences among subgroups inside a country; for instance, the variation from one region to another within a country. Meekanon (2002) argues that such regional variation is likely to have an impact on the differences found among countries in the Hofstede's model. Finally, the scores for the five dimensions of national culture in Hofstede's findings are more than 30 years old and due to cultural changes may be invalid (Earley & Gibson 1998; Meekanon 2002).

In this research, Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture remains relevant and will be used in modeling national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector reality. Hofstede's model explicitly differentiates between national culture and other layers such as organizational, business and professional cultures. The model sees national culture as being more embedded in the people's values and beliefs, while other culture layers are embedded in the practices of specific types of organizations and professions. As a result, national culture is more strongly rooted in the people minds and in their behaviors and practices than culture layers (Hofstede 1980, 1991; Meekanon 2002).

As discussed earlier, the main aim in this research is to preliminarily explain the effects of national culture on service quality. Because service quality is a multidimensional construct that is subject to both individual (customers) and organization (providers) factors, Hofstede's Culture Model is appropriate as it explicitly sees that national culture is not subjected to anyone's plan, but it subjected to a certain logic. As a result, national culture as an influential factor seems to have an effect on both aspects of service quality: perceived and delivered. Hofstede's Culture Model is also applied in building the prototype model since this model has been shown to be reliable approach to identifying national culture differences among many countries Many empirical studies have confirmed the validity of the model in multi-country

comparisons. In the next section the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede's Model are employed in order to develop a prototype model of the reality in the hotel sector.

#### 4.4 Modeling the Reality of the Hotel Sector

The cultural issues that emerge in the hotel sector assume influential relations between national culture and service quality. These national culture - service quality relations require an appropriate way of thinking and then of modeling in order to explain such them more explicitly. Think of what happens with room reservation services, at the hotel reception desk, when German guests are served in an Egyptian hotel. One has to make allowance for the differences between Egyptian and German cultures: German culture is not a melting pot culture and is not mobile (Hall 1990, p. 38). German people seldom invite anyone to their home or, as Hofstede see it, they have "*individualism culture*"- to be invited is considered an honor. The position of things is also important for German people, for instance the right side represents a place of respect. So, in seating arrangements or just walking from one place to another, the senior person/leader should be positioned on the right. German people like to be called by the last names and they maintain direct eye contact in face-to-face conversations to show they are paying attention. Moreover, Germans expect organization and order in all things: everything should be carefully planned, researched and carried out in an orderly manner.

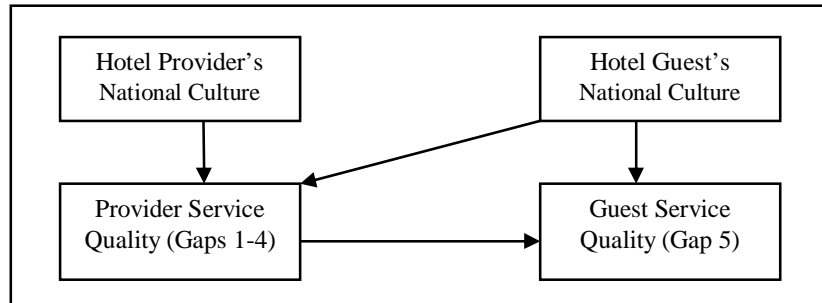
Conversely, Egyptian culture is more collectivist: any stranger rapidly becomes a member of the local family where an informal and relaxed environment rules. It is important for an Egyptian to be able to place people within their social system. Time is important the Egyptian people but to be minutes late for an appointment or meeting is accepted as normal. Egyptian people call each other by their first name but in the formal matters will use the first name followed by the last name. In Egypt, Indian numbers are used starting from right to left whereas Arabic numbers go from left to right (i.e. 1, 2, 3). However, when reserving hotel rooms for important guests (i.e. leaders of groups) Egyptians will start from left to right because the hotel rooms are ranked using Arabic numbers and not Indian ones. It is hopefully clear from this example that delivering and improving the hotel room reservation process is subject to two sets of national cultural norms.

The effects of national culture on service quality in the above example are very complex and difficult to predict. From the hotel provider side, the Egyptian hotel provider will be influenced by the Egyptian national culture rather than the German one. As a result, the German people can perceive that their room reservations are not very clearly organized and planned. Additionally, they, German, often find that the Egyptian employee at the reception desk speaks with them in English not German, because English language is the second language in Egypt. Further, German guests may find the Egyptian receptionist calls them by their first name without even seeing them before. However, the Egyptian hotel provider may be influenced by both Egyptian and German cultures at the same time. In that case, there may be an Egyptian receptionist who speaks German with the guests. Also, German guests may consider the room reservations to be planned.

From the hotel guest side, the German guests are likely to judge the hotel room reservation service based on their German cultural background. If so, they expect and want to receive German hotel service but wherever they are (in Egypt or anywhere). However, the German guests may be influenced by Egyptian culture as the host culture and they will not be surprised, when having rooms on the left side of the Egyptian hotel or having to communicate in English with the Egyptian reception employees as they are in Egypt and not in Germany.

In Figure 4.1 an Initial Model (IM) is developed which describes part of the reality of hotel service quality based on the effects of national culture. This model is an explicit clarification of the effects of the national cultures of both guests and hotel providers on the five service

quality gaps as used in the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Model. According to the Initial Model (IM) the guests’ national culture influences their perceived service quality (Gap 5), as in the last example when German guests expected and perceived a German hotel service from the Egyptian hotel provider. Further, the guests’ national culture also appears to influence the provider service quality (Gaps 1 to 4), such as when the Egyptian hotel provider tries to deliver a German style of service for German guests.



**Figure 4.1 Initial Model of the Reality in the Hotel Sector**

On the other hand, the provider’s national culture also seems to influence the provider service quality (Gaps 1 to 4); such as when delivering an Egyptian style hotel service to international hotel guests in general (and the German guests in the example). Further, there is an indirect influence of the provider’s national culture on the guests’ perceived service quality (Gap 5) through the provider service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). This indirect influence can be seen in the behaviors and practices of the Egyptian hotel provider when performing a service for the hotel guests. For instance, if the Egyptian receptionist speaks German with the German guests, this actual performance influences the guests’ perceived service quality (Gap 5).

The Initial Model (IM) is much simpler than the complex reality, and it is not absolute model since an absolute model would have to account for each of the factors and variables that exist between the national culture and service quality. For instance, in reality the Egyptian hotel provider may serve other hotel guests of French and American nationalities. As a result, the Egyptian provider is delivering a service whose quality for French and American people is quite different than for those from Egyptian and even German cultures. For example, French people stress human or personal contacts in services; so it is preferable not to reply to French hotel guests’ requests by letter or e-mail since letters and phone calls are not personal enough and perceived as a lack of the hotel service quality. This example indicates that not all variables in the hotel reality need be modeled; there are necessary factors or variables and unnecessary ones.

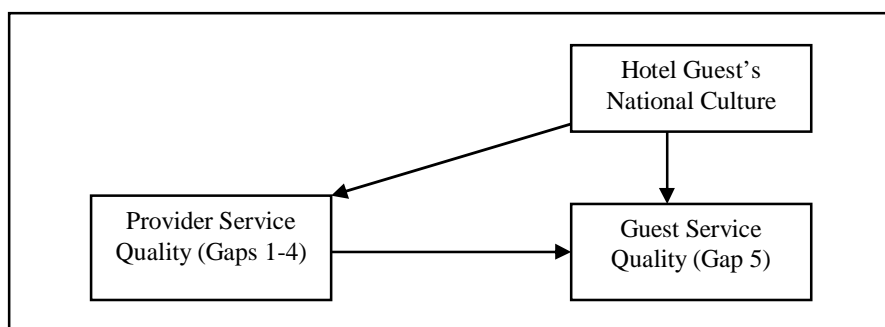
As reflected in the Initial Model (IM), there are two possible perspectives in explaining the national culture - service quality related variables; the first perspective is the guests’ national culture and the (perceived and delivered) service quality, the second perspective is the hotel provider’s national culture and the (perceived and delivered) service quality. In practice, the value of each perspective is reflected in its efficiency in helping to improve hotel service quality as a final aim of building the current research model. In other words, the choice between the two perspectives is determined by their efficiency in explaining how to deal with (close/eliminate) all service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 5), or at least some of these gaps. In the following two sections the two modeling perspectives are discussed.

#### **4.4.1 The Guest Perspective for a Prototype Model**

Based on the Initial Model (IM), the hotel guests influence two main variables: the national culture of the guests and the perceived service quality (Gap 5). It seems obvious that the

national culture of the hotel guests will have direct impact on the guests' perceived service quality gap (Gap 5) as well as on the provider's service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). Using these two impact relations can one build the first possible Prototype Model (see Figure 4.2). The question is to what extent does this Prototype Model have a greater value than the initial model (IM) in helping to improve hotel service quality? Indeed, in the first directed relations, the hotel guests' national culture seems to impact on both the guests' service quality expectations and perceptions equally. When a hotel guest evaluates the hotel service's quality dimensions, he/she will expect these dimensions in terms of their own national culture, and, at the same time, will actually perceive these actual service dimensions through the same own culture.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that hotel guests from different national cultures will expect and perceive hotel service quality in different terms. However, this does not suggest that their own national cultures can close/eliminate the guests' perceived service quality gap (Gap 5) (Mattila & Patterson 2004). It is not reasonable to conclude that because German hotel guests expect a highly organized hotel room reservation, so the German culture can influence the discrepancy between these expectations and the actual perceptions of the room reservation service quality. In other words, the influences of the guests' culture on their service quality expectations and perceptions are equal. Further, it is understandable that hotel guests are more influenced by the hotel provider's culture, which influences the provider's actual ways, practices and behaviors through which the hotel service quality is actually delivered and performed than by their own culture.



**Figure 4.2 Prototype Model of Guest National Culture - Service Quality Relations**

A high quality of service means meeting or exceeding a guest's expectations (Grönroos 1984; Parasuraman *et al.* 1985). The evaluation/judgment process is established and operationalized by a direct comparison between the guests' expectations and their perceptions of the actual service performance provided by the hotel. So, the logical process to measure the hotel guest's expectations are and then measure is the guest's evaluation of the actual provider's performance since Gap 5 is the difference (note that the measurement instrument used by guests is the same in both measures).

In addition, the hotel guest's national culture seems also to influence the hotel provider gaps but from a provider point of view, different guest national cultures are the only sources of service quality expectations and requirements that need to be known (i.e. Provider Gap 1), standardized (Provider Gap 2), performed (Provider Gap 3) and communicated (Provider Gap 4) if good quality service is delivered for a range of international guests. Therefore, from the hotel providers' point of view, a guest's national culture seems to be a conventional and unchangeable variable: it is present, and should be managed in order to satisfy different international hotel guests. Indeed, the national culture of the hotel guest cannot close and eliminate the provider gaps because closing these internal gaps depends on the actual ways, practices and behaviors of the hotel provider in the delivering of services.



The problem with selecting the guest perspective is the difficulty as well as the ambiguity, in deducing the expected value that lies behind modeling such guests' variables (national culture and Gap 5). There are no concrete links between the hotel guest variables that can explain how to close and eliminate the service quality gaps; such as, how to explain the influence of German culture on closing Gap 2 by the Egyptian hotel provider. Therefore, using the guest perspective to help in improving the hotel service quality, the final aim of the research model, is too difficult and ambiguous. In reality, it is difficult to claim that hotel providers can deliver and improve various service qualities given the different national culture backgrounds of their guests, and at the same time accept that hotel providers need to change and improve their ways, practices and behaviors in service delivery to the various hotel guests. This is why a hotel provider perspective seems more realistic since the hotel provider variables (National culture and Gaps 1 to 4) seem to be the effective one to help in improving hotel service quality to meet the various guests' needs and requirements.

#### 4.4.2 The Provider Perspective for a Prototype Model

As has become clear, hotel service deliveries and improvements in quality depend on the ways, practices and behaviors through which hotel providers close and eliminate the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) that, in turn, close and eliminate the guests' gap (Gap 5). For instance, the hotel provider in Egypt, in the last example, cannot change the approach by which the German or French guests evaluate the Egyptian hotel services. However, Egyptian hotel providers can change and develop their ways, practices and behaviors in delivering and improving hotel service quality to meet the German or French expectations and needs. For this reason, finding the mechanisms (reasons and consequences) through which national culture affect and explain these provider gaps is considered to be of the greater value when modeling the national culture - service quality relations. In Figure 4.3 a provider perspective for building a Prototype Model is shown. As illustrated, the national culture of the hotel provider has a direct influence on the provider service quality (Gaps 1 to 4) and thus an indirect influence on the guests' perceived service quality (Gap 5).

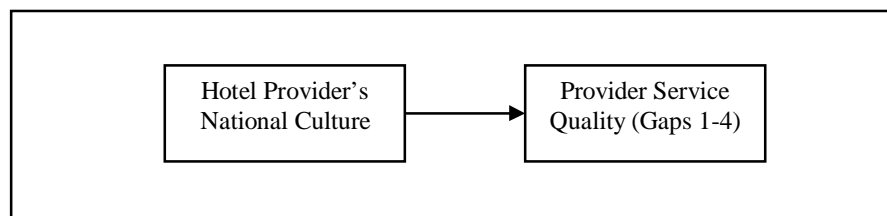


Figure 4.3 A Prototype Model of Provider Culture - Service Quality Relations

As noted earlier, the Extended Gaps Model assumes that service providers in general and the try to perform to their "best" abilities to close the internal gaps with pre-established standards but, even so, all four internal gaps will remain take place (Rosene 2003; Zeithaml & Bitner 2003). In the hotel situation, this assumption leads one to think about the ways, practices and behaviors by which providers try to close and eliminate these internal gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). In other words, what do hotel providers behave and do in terms of each one of these gaps related to their national culture. If the national culture does influence the ways, behaviors and practices by which things are done within organizations (Hofstede 1980, 1991), then it has to be accepted that the hotel providers' national culture will cut across all the provider's internal gaps. As a result, it is reasonable to argue that the hotel provider's national culture will interpret the extent to which the hotel providers act to deal with and close these internal gaps in order to increase the guests' perceived service quality (i.e. close/eliminate Gap 5).

In this situation, there is additional need to explain the discrepancy between what is actually done in the hotel reality within the hotel provider's organizations and what should be done to close each internal gap. Rosene (2003, p. 52) states, "*a feeling of contentment is achieved before the optimal level of performance is reached*" in service organizations. In making this argument at the international level, this contentment varies among hotel organizations based on the variations in national cultures. This contentment varies can be traced and found in one or more of the provider's ways, practices and behaviors adopted in closing and eliminating the internal gaps.

As an example, an Egyptian hotel provider should search and acquire information and knowledge about the expectations of German guests (closing Information Gap 1). As a result, the Egyptian hotel provider (i.e. top managers) needs to carry out marketing research, improve upward communications and reduce hotel management levels. This is what should be done but, for national culture reasons, the Egyptian hotel provider might or might not carry out the practices and behaviors needed to close the information Gap 1. Rosene (2003) argues that some service organizations might perform better than the others in closing the internal service quality gaps because the culture of these organizations. In a national sense, the hotel providers need to recognize how their national culture influences their actual ways, practices and behaviors in closing the internal gaps. Such recognition and identification give the service providers an ability to grasp cultural opportunities as well as solving any culture problems in closing and eliminating the internal service quality gaps.

Grabbing cultural opportunities as well as solving any cultural problems or challenges does not imply changing the national cultures of the hotel providers but to changing ways, real behaviors and practices to close and eliminate the internal service quality gaps. This modeling perspective seems reasonable because it will help the hotel providers, and in particular hotel top managers and service employees, to realize how they can their managerial and/or employee behaviors in terms of service quality in order to close and eliminate the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4).

#### **4.5 The Research Perspective for the Prototype Model (Mo)**

The hotel provider perspective on building a prototype model of national culture - service quality relations offers the greatest value in helping hotel managers and service employees to improve service quality by thinking about their national perspectives and learning from them. This approach to building the prototype model is based on an understanding that hotel providers seem to differ when closing the internal gaps in service quality depending on their national culture backgrounds (Hope 2004). Making these variations explicit to hotel managers and service employees will let them think, learn and move towards better service quality situations. In other words, identifying the effects of national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity and long/short term orientation) on the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) will enable hotel managers and service employees to understand which service quality gaps should be closed and how to achieve this, better than other approaches based on their national culture position.

By observing service quality behaviors and practices in two different national hotel providers, one can see the differences in how these providers close or eliminate internal service quality gaps. A comparison of these differences will help to identify the mechanisms (reasons and consequences) by which each national culture dimension affects each internal gap. In the prototype model, not all the five dimensions of Hofstede model are examined. Based on empirical work by Kattara (2005), it seems difficult to examine the Masculinity/Femininity dimension in some hotel contexts. As a result, only the other four cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long-/short- term orientation) will be examined in the prototype model. The prototype model is schematically phrased in Table 4.2, and empirical research will allow the model empty cells to be filled.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Information</b> <b>Gap 1</b>	<b>Specifications</b> <b>Gap 2</b>	<b>Performance</b> <b>Gap 3</b>	<b>Communication</b> <b>Gap 4</b>
<b>Power Distance</b>				
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b>				
<b>Individualism/Collectivism</b>				
<b>Long-/ Short- Term</b> <b>Orientation</b>				

**Table 4.2 The Prototype Model for National Culture - Service Quality Relations (M0)**

The prototype model of national culture - service quality relations has been built to answer the following questions: 1) “*what are the preliminary national culture explanations for the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) in the hotel sector?*” and 2) *what activities are carried out within hotel providers in order to close/eliminate service quality gaps depending on the national culture of the hotel provider?* on Furthermore, based on the work of Hope (2004), the prototype model is built based on the assumption that: “*hotel providers differ in closing and eliminating the internal service quality gaps depending on their national culture backgrounds*”. In this case, observing how different hotel providers close or eliminate the internal gaps in service quality, will empirically allow us to understand how each cultural dimension affects each service quality gap. Finally, the investigation of actual behaviors and practices in hotel organizations needs a national culture component. This should contain at least two different national culture backgrounds. In this research, the prototype model is empirically evaluated in two significantly different cultures: the Egyptian and Dutch contexts<sup>16</sup>.

#### 4.6 The Prototype Model Operationalization

This research falls into the model-building category, and is as effort to preliminarily explain how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. In building the prototype model of national culture - service quality relations, all the conceptual entities, or constructs within the model must be operationalized in such a way as to establish the criteria for evaluating this model. These constructs may not always be strictly measurable but they must, at least, become focal points in evaluating this prototypical model in the empirical hotel context. Consequently, these conceptual constructs should be sufficiently observable, explicable and applicable to evaluate the model. Here, the operationalization should be reliable in terms of the service quality and national culture constructs specified in the prototype model. In line with this prototype model, the service quality gaps and national culture dimensions are summarized in Table 4.3.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information</b> <b>Gap 1</b>	<b>Specifications</b> <b>Gap 2</b>	<b>Performance</b> <b>Gap 3</b>	<b>Communications</b> <b>Gap 4</b>
<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Power</b> <b>Distance</b>	<b>Uncertainty</b> <b>Avoidance</b>	<b>Individualism/</b> <b>Collectivism</b>	<b>Long-/Short-Term</b> <b>Orientation</b>

**Table 4.3 Description of the Prototype Model Constructs**

From Table 4.3, there are eight constructs that should be operationalized in the hotel context in order to create a validated criterion for evaluating the prototype model. Even if these constructs are measurable, they are not fully targeted at measuring the differences between

<sup>16</sup> The national cultural differences between Egypt and the Netherlands are discussed in Chapter 5.

Egyptian and Dutch cultures. As a result, the operationalization of these constructs needs to be aimed at investigating the real ways, practices and behaviors for closing hotel service quality gaps within two different cultural backgrounds (Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers). In this instance, the service quality gaps should be operationalized at the micro-level and be the as dependent variables whereas the national culture dimensions should be operationalized at the macro-level and act as the independent variables for describing what is found in the Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers. If the hotel providers influenced by their respective cultures in closing their service quality gaps, the relations between the national culture dimensions at the macro-level, and service quality gaps at the micro-level will serve as a fundamental explanation for evaluating the prototype model.

#### 4.6.1 Service Quality Operationalization

According to the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990), service quality should be operationalized in such a way that hotel providers can close/narrow the various internal gaps and the customer gap. By focusing on the providers' side, there are four organizational gaps which are defined and operationalized as follow in the hotel context:

**Hotel Provider Gap 1 (Information Gap):** this is the difference between the hotel guest's expectations of the service quality and hotel provider's perceptions of these expectations. Hotel providers (i.e. hotel top managers) may not always understand what features indicate a high level of service quality from the guests' point of view, that is what features a service must have in order to meet the guests' expectations, and what levels of performance in terms of those features are necessary to deliver high quality.

**Operationalization:** Hotel provider information Gap1 is operationalized as the service quality behaviors and practices through which the hotel top managers and senior executives acquire information about the hotel guests' expectations & needs in order to fully understand these expectations and know the guests' needs. In the Extended Gap Model, Zeithaml and her colleagues (1988, 1990) operationalize these service quality behaviors and practices in terms of carrying out marketing research, upward communications and the levels of hotel management. In this situation, how Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers actually research and acquire information about their guests' expectations is the focus in seeking operationalization. Table 4.4 illustrates the sub-operational explanations for this hotel provider gap (Information Gap 1).

Sub-Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Marketing Research:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the hotel top managers and senior executives actually perform formal and informal information-gathering activities to understand the hotel guests' expectations and needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does generating and collecting information about the guests' needs &amp; expectations help in delivering high service quality? Can you easily predict the guests' expectations?</li> <li>2. What are the main methods used for generating or collecting such information in your hotel? How do you gather this information?</li> <li>3. Who is in charge of gathering this information?</li> <li>4. What kind of information (formal/informal) do you gather or collect?</li> <li>5. Do you consider this kind of information is sufficient? Why did you decide to collect such information?</li> <li>6. What is the use of this information? Do you use this information for delivering high services to your guests or for organizing the internal process of the hotel service quality?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Upward Communications:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hotel top managers and senior executives actually seek, stimulate, and facilitate the flow of guest information from hotel service employees at lower levels.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Do you see a need to share and communicate this information with hotel employees at lower levels?</li> <li>8. In which form do you encourage receiving information and suggestions from the frontline employees? e.g. Reports, Regular discussions, Face to face meetings..</li> <li>9. Is there a (formal/informal) channel for first-line employees to communicate with hotel managers and top executives about the guests' views?</li> <li>10. Why did you decide to use such channels to communicate with the frontline employees?</li> <li>11. What are the main characteristics of the communications within your hotel? Are they high context and non-verbal, or low context &amp; verbal?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Management Levels:</b></p> <p>Number of managerial levels between the topmost and bottommost positions in the hotel organization.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. What is the organizational structure of your hotel? Is it flat or hierarchical?</li> <li>13. Does this structure facilitate the flow of guests' information within your hotel?</li> <li>14. How many managerial levels separate hotel top managers and executives from frontline employees?</li> </ol>

**Table 4.4 Sub-Operational Explanations for Service Quality Gap 1**  
Adapted from Zeithaml *et al.* (1990)

**Hotel Provider Gap 2 (Specifications Gap 2):** this is the difference between the hotel provider's perceptions of the guests' expectations and the actual service quality specifications and standards that are set and built. In other words, this hotel providers' gap is the difference between the hotel providers understanding of guests' expectations and development of hotel guest-driven service specifications and standards.

**Operationalization:** Hotel provider Gap 2 is operationalized as the service quality behaviors and practices with which the hotel top managers and senior executives translate and transform the guests' expectations into service quality specifications and standards. In other words, translate information and knowledge regarding the guests' expectations into clear quality specifications. In the Extended Gaps Model Zeithaml and her colleagues (1988, 1990) operationalize these service quality behaviors and practices in terms of management commitment to service quality as a strategic goal, the feasibility of meeting the guests' expectations, task standardization and goal-setting. For this research, this becomes how Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers actually translate information and knowledge about guests' expectations into service quality specifications and standards is the focus under this

operationalization. Table 4.5 outlines the sub-operational explanations for this hotel provider gap.

Sub-Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Management Commitment to Service Quality:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hotel top managers and senior executives consider service quality as a key strategic goal.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the main goal in your hotel? e.g. profit, market share, satisfying guests</li> <li>2. Do you see a need for a strategy of service quality improvements?</li> <li>3. What kind of managerial support is committed to the hotel departments in order to achieve service quality improvements? i.e. do top managers support &amp; cooperate with the middle managers?</li> <li>3. What kind of strategic programs exist in your hotel for improving the service quality? e.g. quality programs, training</li> <li>4. How often has your hotel provided such programs in the last five years?</li> <li>5. How long does each program last?</li> <li>6. Who participates in these programs?</li> <li>7. What are the main incentives for the participants in such programs? e.g. increased salaries, job promotions.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Feasibility:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the hotel tangibly meets the guests' expectations and needs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. How do you assess the feasibility of your hotel satisfying guests?</li> <li>9. What are the physical and personal capabilities in your hotel for meeting the guests' expectations and needs?</li> <li>10. What is more important for your hotel: the physical capabilities or the personal capabilities?</li> <li>11. Do you have problems/opportunities with the introduction and adaptation of new technologies?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Task Standardization:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hard and soft technologies are used to standardize service tasks.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Are the services that you deliver subjected to a high degree of standardization?</li> <li>13. Is the standardization in your hotel based on hard technology? e.g. computers, internal networks, information databases, e-mail, or on the soft technology? e.g. work process, routines, rules</li> <li>14. What is the relative importance of each of these two technology types?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Goal Setting:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the goals of service quality are based on external standards (guests' expectations) rather than internal standards.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. What is the main criterion for setting service quality goals in your hotel? Is it guests' expectations or internal service standards?</li> <li>16. What are the long and short-term goals in your hotel?</li> <li>17. How do you measure performance in meeting these goals?</li> </ol>

**Table 4.5 Sub-Operational Explanations for Service Quality Gap 2**  
Adapted from Zeithaml *et al.* (1990)

**Hotel Provider Gap 3 (Performance Gap):** this is the difference between the hotel's service quality specifications and the actual service performance achieved by the hotel frontline service employees. Even when specifications and standards exist for performing services well, and treating service guests correctly, high-quality service performance is not a certainty. Service specifications must be backed by appropriate resources (people, systems and technology) and must also be enforced if they are to be effective. In other words, service employees must be measured and compensated on the basis of performing to specifications.

**Operationalization:** Hotel provider Gap 3 is operationalized as the service quality behaviors and practices through which the hotel frontline employees translate the service quality specifications and standards into actions and performance for the hotel guests. In the Extended Gaps Model, Zeithaml and her colleagues (1988, 1990) operationalize these service

quality behaviors and practices in terms of role ambiguity, role conflict, employee-job fit, technology-job fit, performance evaluation, control systems, and teamwork. In this specific instance, how Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers actually meet the service quality specifications and standards is the focus of this operational definition. Table 4.6 illustrates the sub-operational explanations for this hotel provider gap.

Sub-Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Role Ambiguity in the Hotel:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hotel employees are uncertain about what the hotel managers and supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations.</p>	<p>1. What kind of information do you get from the hotel management about your job?                  2. Do you consider this information is sufficient to accomplish your job and task?                  3. In what ways is this information is communicated to you?                  4. Do you (personally) have a clear picture of what your job is compared with other jobs in the hotel?                  5. How often has your hotel management provided you with training programs in the last five years?</p>
<p><b>Role Conflict in the Hotel:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hotel employees cannot satisfy all the demands of all the internal and external individuals they must serve.</p>	<p>6. Do the hotel managers and guests have the same expectations of you?                  7. Do you have more work to do than time to do it in?                  8. What kind of relationship do you have with your hotel managers? Is it formal or informal?</p>
<p><b>Hotel Employee-Job Fit:</b></p> <p>The match between hotel employees' skills and their jobs.</p>	<p>9. Does the hotel management hire employees who are highly experienced or high educated?                  10. Why did you decide to work with this hotel?                  11. What are the main staff selection ways &amp; procedures in your hotel?                  12. Does the hotel management devote sufficient time &amp; resources to hiring the right employees?</p>
<p><b>Hotel Technology-Job Fit:</b></p> <p>The appropriateness of the tools and technology that hotel employees use to perform their jobs.</p>	<p>13. What tools and equipment are needed to perform your job? Are they sufficient and available?                  14. How often do these tools and equipments fail to operate?</p>
<p><b>Supervisory Control Systems:</b></p> <p>The appropriateness of the evaluation and reward systems in the hotel.</p>	<p>15. What aspects of your job are mostly stressed in performance evaluation?                  16. What is the relation between what you do and what you are rewarded for ?                  17. What are the main reward forms in your hotel? e.g. financial rewards, career advancement, recognition.</p>
<p><b>Perceived Control:</b></p> <p>The extent to which hotel service employees can act flexibly in performing their jobs.</p>	<p>18. When do you have freedom to make decisions in your job?                  19. When do you need approval from your supervisor for doing your tasks?</p>
<p><b>Teamwork:</b></p> <p>The extent to which employees and managers pull together for a common goal.</p>	<p>20. In what way are you encouraged to work together in your hotel?                  21. How often has your manager cooperated with you rather than competed?</p>

**Table 4.6 Sub-Operational Explanations for Service Quality Gap 3**  
 Adapted from Zeithaml *et al.* (1990)

**Hotel Provider Gap 4 (Communications Gap):** this is the difference between service quality promises and what the hotel provider (frontline service employees) is actually capable of delivering to the hotel guests. Promises made by service providers through their media advertising, their sales force, and other hotel communications may potentially raise guests' expectations which then serves as the standard against which hotel guests assess the delivered service quality.

**Operationalization:** Hotel provider Gap 4 is operationalized as the service quality behaviors and practices through which the hotel managers and hotel frontline service employees communicate and interpret the actual service performance and delivery to the hotel guests. In the Extended Gaps Model, Zeithaml and her colleagues (1988, 1990) operationalize these ways, practices and behaviors in terms of horizontal communications and propensity to overpromise. In this research, how Egyptian and Dutch hotel providers actually communicate and interpret the service performance to the hotel guests is the focus in the operationalization. Table 4.7 outlines the sub-operational explanations for this hotel provider gap.

Sub-Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Horizontal Communications:</b></p> <p>The extent to which communication occurs both within &amp; between different departments of the hotel.</p>	<p>1. What do you think about the communication channels in your hotel? Are they open among the hotel departments and functions or not?</p> <p>2. Are the hotel policies and procedures consistent across the hotel departments and functions?</p>
<p><b>Propensity to Overpromise:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the hotel's external communications with guests accurately reflect what guests receive.</p>	<p>3. Do you (personally) have a clear picture of what the guests get within your hotel?</p> <p>4. According to your criteria is the information available for the guests sufficient?</p> <p>5. Is this information sufficiently clear to allow hotel guests to know exactly what they will receive from the hotel?</p>

**Table 4.7 Sub-Operational Explanations for Service Quality Gap 4**  
Adapted from Zeithaml *et al.* (1990)

### 4.5.2 National Culture Operationalization

In line with Table 4.3, the second group of constructs within the prototype model consists of the national culture dimensions. These national culture dimensions should be operationalized at the macro-level and as independent variables for describing what is actually found within Egyptian and Dutch cultures. According to the Hofstede Model of national culture, global culture dimensions can be defined and operationalized using the following explanations in the hotel context:

**Power Distance:** Defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. (Hofstede 1991, p. 28). The power term in this definition reflects the ability to determine the behavior of other hotel members and vice versa and limit the behavioral options of other members (Hofstede, 1980, 1984b, 1991). In this respect, some hotel members (e.g. top managers, leaders, and senior supervisors) are given more status and respect than others (e.g. junior frontline employees, subordinates). However, power is not something that can be ordained, there can only be evidence of authority if others accept this power. In other words, this culture dimension tells us about dependence relationships in the country in general and in social groups such as hotel organizations. In culture with a large power distance there is considerable dependence of some individuals on others (e.g. subordinates on their supervisors). As a consequence, the emotional distance between the more powerful and less powerful individuals is comparatively large. Conversely, in small power distance cultures there is considerable independence among individuals. The emotive distance between the more powerful and the less powerful individuals is relatively small.

**Operationalization:** Power distance is operationalized as the set of values and beliefs in which hotel members as individuals handle the power assessment as well as the power distribution within the hotel organization. Consequently, power distance is operationalized in two related directions: Firstly from the value system of the less powerful members such as the



hotel frontline employees and subordinates. Here, power distance is operationalized in terms of how hotel members accept and even have a preference for that an unequal power distribution. Secondly, power distance is also operationalized by the way in which power is distributed through the styles of the more powerful hotel members such as the hotel managers, leaders, and supervisors. This form the operational explanation will show the differences in attitudes and behaviors of both the hotel top managers as leaders and the hotel more junior employees as those being led.

This operational explanation derives from Hofstede’s Model (1980, 1991) and the earlier work by Mulder (1976, 1977) on the emotional distance that separates subordinates from their supervisors. Hofstede (1991) sub-operationalizes this national culture dimension in terms of the extent to which individuals can express disagreement with others, how a decision is taken, and in which style and finally preferences for certain decision-making styles. These three directions to power distance dimension indicate the true value system with which the individuals handle their daily work environment, and further, how they like their work environment to really be. Table 4.8 outlines the operationalization of this dimension in the hotel context. In order to empirically investigate this dimension, the investigation was started by individually contacting the hotel managers and hotel service employees in the strategic/planning and the operational groups (*i.e.* the general manager, department managers; reception & reservation staff, housekeeping and room service personnel, and the kitchen staff).

Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Power Distance:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the more and less powerful members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede 1991, p. 28).</p>	<p><b>Subordinates Level:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do you think that hotel members (<i>i.e.</i> superiors and subordinates) are equal? Why and based on what criteria?</li> <li>2. Can you determine the behaviors of other hotel members? whom and in which situation?</li> <li>3. How frequently are you afraid to express disagreement with your boss/manager?</li> <li>4. Do you influence your supervisor/manager in making decisions? To what extent?</li> <li>5. What do you consider the decision-making style of your supervisor/manager to be ? <i>e.g.</i> autocratic, paternalistic, consultative.</li> <li>6. Which kind of these styles do you prefer and why?</li> </ol> <p><b>Management Level:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Do you think that hotel staff members are equal? Why and based on what criteria?</li> <li>8. In general, what kind of decision-making styles do you have with your subordinates? <i>e.g.</i> autocratic, paternalistic, or consultative.</li> <li>9. Which kind of these styles do you prefer and why?</li> </ol>

**Table 4.8 Operational Explanations for Power Distance Dimension**  
Developed Based on Hofstede (1991)

**Uncertainty Avoidance:** Defined as the extent to which the members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede 1991, p. 113). This culture dimension can be expressed through stress and the need for predictability by hotel staff members (Hofstede 1980, 1984b, 1991). Indeed, uncertainty avoidance is related to how individuals in a country in general and in specific social groups such as a hotel organization perceive and deal with job stresses, formal rules and with ambiguity tolerance. In this respect, in a strong uncertainty avoidance culture, hotel members are likely to be anxious when they face unstructured, equivocal or erratic situations. Further, hotel staff will try to avoid ambiguity and search for clear structures & rules for their behaviors and relationships. In this way, they try to make events clearly

interpretable and predictable. Conversely, in countries with a weak uncertainty avoidance culture, hotel members tend to feel relatively comfortable in such unstructured situations. Furthermore, they have a lower sense of urgency and they accept familiar and unfamiliar risks such as changing jobs or working without clear rules.

**Operationalization:** Uncertainty avoidance is operationalized as the set of values and beliefs in which hotel members contract and deal with uncertainty situations (i.e. accept or avoid them). Feeling stress in doing the job and seeing a need for rules that be respected are key signs in the strong uncertainty avoidance. This operational explanation is derived from Hofstede (1980, 1991). Table 4.9 illustrates the operationalization for uncertainty avoidance dimension in the hotel context. In order to empirically investigate this dimension, the investigation is started by individually contacting the hotel managers and hotel employees in the strategic/planning and the operational groups (e.g. the general manager, department managers, reception & reservation staff, housekeeping and room service personnel, and catering employees).

Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Uncertainty Avoidance:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede 1991, p.113).</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How often do you feel nervous or tense at work in this hotel?</li> <li>2. How often do you use the hotel rules to deal with an unexpected situation?</li> <li>3. Do you think that hotel rules are important in such situations?</li> <li>4. To what extent do you think that hotel rules should not be broken?</li> <li>5. How long do you think you will continue working for this hotel?</li> <li>6. What is your feeling if there would be an opportunity to work in another hotel in a different job?</li> </ol>

**Table 4.9 Operational Explanations for Uncertainty Avoidance Dimension**  
Developed Based on Hofstede (1991)

**Individualism/Collectivism:** This is defined as the extent to which the hotel members identify themselves as either an individual or a member of a group. It reflects the relationship between the interests of the individuals and the interests of the group. This cultural dimension thus explains whether the individual or the collective prevails in a country in general and in specific social groups such as the hotel organizations. In this respect, Individualism-Collectivism dimension describes how far hotel staff members (from the manager down to junior staff) consider restricting their own aims and plans in the light of the collective view. The relationships among hotel staff members are likely to be more profound, longer lasting and more involuntary in a collectivistic culture than in an individual one.

**Operationalization:** the cultural dimension of individualism versus collectivism is operationalized as the set of values, and beliefs through which the hotel staff members work and interact within the hotel organization. Here, individualism/collectivism dimension explains how the hotel staff value and behave towards group goals rather than their own individual goals. Further, it includes how hotel staff members value and act towards group loyalty as agonist individual autonomy and personal pleasure. This operationalization derives from Hofstede Model of national culture (1980, 1991). Table 4.10 provides the operationalization of this national culture dimension in the hotel context. In order to empirically investigate this dimension, the investigation started by individually contacting the hotel managers as well as hotel employees in the strategic/planning and the operational groups (e.g. the general manager, department managers, reception & reservation staff, housekeeping and room service personnel , the food & beverage employees).

Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Individualism/Collectivism</b></p> <p>The extent to which the members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country identify themselves as either an individual or members of a group (Hofstede, 1991, p. 50-53)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did you decide to work with this hotel?</li> <li>2. To what extent do you depend on the hotel to improve your skills and abilities?</li> <li>3. According to your criteria, does the hotel give you sufficient time for your personal life?</li> <li>4. To what extent does your hotel gives you freedom to adopt your own skills for doing your work? Are you always certain about that?</li> <li>5. Do you prefer to be challenged in your work in this hotel? i.e. to achieve a personal sense of accomplishment.</li> <li>6. When do you prefer to cooperate with your group members rather than maximize the personal outcome of your job?</li> <li>7. Do you consider the hotel staff to one group or a collection of individuals?</li> <li>8. In your opinion, which is more superior, the group decision or your decision?</li> <li>9. Are you always certain about the training opportunities in your hotel?</li> <li>10. Are you always certain about the physical conditions in your hotel work?</li> </ol>

**Table 4.10 Operational Explanations for Individualism-Collectivism Dimension Developed Based on Hofstede (1991)**

**Long- versus Short-term Orientation:** This is defined as the extent to which the hotel staff members are oriented towards ether short-term or long-term goals on a Confucian principle. In other words, the extent to which individuals in a country in general and in a particular social group accept a delaying the gratification and satisfaction of their physical, social and emotional needs and wants. In countries with long-term orientation, the hotel staff members will tend to be thrifty, industrious and education-oriented as they are willing to delay their needs for short-term gain for future gratification. Conversely, in short-term oriented cultures, the hotel staff members tend to be generous, relaxed and face-saving as they are not willing to delay satisfying their present needs.

**Operationalization:** Long-versus Short-Term Orientation is operationalized as the set of values, and beliefs by which the hotel staff members manage their needs and achieve satisfaction. Here, this dimension explains how the hotel members/individuals value and think in achieving their needs. Further, it includes how hotel staff members the short-term and long-term goals of their Table 4.11 explain the operationalization of this culture dimension in the hotel context. To empirically investigate this culture dimension, the investigation started by individually contacting hotel managers as well as hotel employees in the strategic/planning and the operational groups (i.e. general manager, department managers, reception & reservation staff, housekeeping and room service personnel, the food & beverage employees).

Operational Explanation	Specific illustrative issues during the empirical evaluation of the prototype model
<p><b>Long/ Short-term Orientation:</b></p> <p>The extent to which the hotel staff members are oriented towards either short-term or long-term goals on a Confucian principle.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the main priority in your goals for working in this hotel?</li> <li>2. What are the criteria for achieving these goals? Time, difficulty, <i>etc.</i></li> <li>3. In general terms, how would you evaluate the goal orientation in your hotel? Short-term/ long-term <i>etc.</i></li> </ol>

**Table 4.11 Operational Explanations for Long-/Short- Term Orientation Dimension Developed Based on Hofstede & Bond (1988, as cited in Meekanon 2002)**

## **4.7 Summary**

This chapter set out to build a prototype model of national culture - service quality relations. Pidd's (1996) approach to modeling is adopted. Further, by focusing on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture, a prototype model has been built. In the hotel reality, the national cultures of both the hotel provider and the guests seem to affect service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 5). In hotel situation, modeling the provider's national culture and the internal gaps in service quality is seen as the most effective way to obtain a prototype model. Accordingly, four internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4; Information Gap1, Specifications Gap 2, Performance Gap 3 and Communications Gap 4) plus four national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long-/short- term orientation) were identified in a prototype model schema.

The next chapter addresses the first empirical evaluation of this prototype model. One of the aims of this evaluation is to complete the prototype model schema. In other words, uncovering the mechanisms through which each of the national culture dimensions affects each of the service quality gaps. The other aim is to improve the prototype model in order to reach a better understanding of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector

## **Chapter 5. The First Empirical Investigation: Evaluating the Prototype Model and Finding the Mechanisms**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, a prototype model (M0) of national culture - service quality relations was developed to answer the following questions: “*what are the preliminary national culture explanations for the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) in the hotel sector?, and 2) what activities are carried out within hotel providers in order to close/eliminate service quality gaps depending on the national culture of the hotel provider?*”. Based on the work of Hope (2004), the prototype model (M0) is build based on the following assumption: “hotel providers differ in closing/eliminating the internal service quality gaps depending on their national culture backgrounds”. The empirical evaluation of this prototype model (M0) will provide answers to these two questions. Further, the empirical evaluation will allow completion of the unfilled cells of the prototype model (M0) and establish an improved model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector.

Investigating service quality gaps and national culture dimensions in the hotel reality will reveal the mechanisms by which each cultural dimension affects each service quality gap. Determining and conceptualizing each dimension/gap mechanism is only possible through empirical investigation and analysis. In other words, investigating how hotel providers (managers and service employees) from two distinct cultural backgrounds close/eliminate the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) will enable preliminary explanations of how each national culture dimension affects each service quality gap. The Egyptian and Dutch hotel sectors represent the empirical settings from where the four hotel case studies were selected and then conducted and represent the entire empirical investigation of this research.

In this chapter, the first part of the empirical investigation necessary to evaluate the prototype model (M0) is presented through the first two hotel case studies (one Egyptian and the other Dutch). Accordingly, this chapter begins by identifying the national cultural differences between Egypt and the Netherlands. In doing so, section 5.2 presents a profile of Egyptian-Dutch cultural differences. This cultural profile is based on a relative comparison between Egypt and the Netherlands using Hofstede’s cross-cultural research (1980, 1984, 1990). Section 5.3 outlines the first empirical evaluation of the prototype model (M0). In this section, four detailed steps are empirically tracked in order complete the unfilled cells of the prototype model. Subsequently, Section 5.4 fully presents the first Egyptian hotel case study (EG), and Section 5.5 presents the first Dutch hotel case study (NL). In Section 5.6, a comparison between the Egyptian and Dutch hotel case studies is presented. From this, an improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations is concluded and presented. Moreover, this section advances partial conclusions and further questions to consider when carrying out the second part of the empirical investigation. Finally, a summary of this chapter is presented in section 5.7.

### **5.2 National Culture Differences between Egypt and the Netherlands**

The need to identify national cultural differences between Egypt and the Netherlands is clearly relevant in evaluating the prototype model (M0). Thus, the aim of this section is to present a cultural difference profile of these two countries. The profile reflects the fact that Egypt and the Netherlands represent two quite distinct cultural backgrounds in terms of all of Hofstede’s culture dimensions that are used in the prototype model: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long-/short- term orientation (Hofstede 1980, 1984, 1991). Hofstede placed Egypt within the “*Arab countries cluster*” that consists of Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya and Saudi Arabia plus Egypt. Each country in this Arab cluster

is given the same average score for each culture dimension index<sup>17</sup> as found for Egypt (Hofstede 1991, p.55). Conversely, Hofstede studied the Netherlands as a distinct country with its own score for each culture dimension. In the following subsections, both the Egyptian and Dutch national culture characteristics are more discussed in more details:

### 5.2.1 National Culture Characteristics of Egypt

- **Large Power Distance**

Inequality within Egypt is quite visible through the existence of an order of inequality among Egyptian people. For instance, children within families are expected to obey their parents, younger children are expected to yield to older children in the same family (Kabasakal & Bodur 2002, Zakaria *et al.* 2003). Independent behavior on the part of a child is not encouraged in Egypt. Respect for elders and more powerful people is seen as a basic Egyptian virtue. In working places/organizations in Egypt, there is a significant dependence of subordinates on their supervisors. The inequality in the work place is very apparent and this means that supervisors have more power to determine the behaviors of subordinates than vice versa. Egyptian subordinates, as low powerful members in their organization, prefer autocratic or paternalistic supervisors as reflection of this inequality and dependence (Kabasakal & Bodur 2002). Further, the more powerful members such as senior managers and supervisors are given more status and respect than their subordinates. Moreover, Egyptian organizations centralize power as much as possible in a few members.

- **Strong Uncertainty Avoidance**

Strong uncertainty avoidance is a means of reducing ambiguity in Egypt. For instance, Egyptian people are obliged to carry identity cards in order to be able to legitimately identify themselves whenever requested to do so. In general, what is different is dangerous and, so Egyptian people try to avoid ambiguous situations and circumstances (Kabasakal & Bodur 2002). In the workplace, Egyptians are looking for an obvious and formal structure, rules and regulations, and relationships in their organizations. As a result, laws and rules exist to try to prevent uncertainties. In Egypt, there is a sense of stress and anxiety and lack of public acceptance of familiar or unfamiliar risks. In the Egyptian workplaces, there are many formal and informal laws and rules controlling the rights and duties of employers and employees. Furthermore, there are many internal rules and regulations controlling work processes and operations.

- **Collectivism**

In Egypt, children are used to growing up within a large family and among a number of elders, peers and juniors. Accordingly, Egyptians naturally learn to consider that “*We*” is more important than “*I*”. There is a great emphasis on the role of the group rather than the role of individuals. The first structured group in the lives of Egyptians is always the family within which they learn to think of themselves as a part of this group (Zakaria *et al.* 2003). Among Egyptian people, a dependence relationship grows within such grouping which is both psychological and practical. For instance, the oldest son traditionally stays and lives with his parents, thus creating a lineal family structure. In the workplace, Egyptian employers never hire an individual with their own needs, rather the hiring procedures take into account the in-group within which the new employee will act and work. The hiring of family members is common employment issue in Egypt. Further, the relationship between an employer and employee is seen as a moral matter or, in other terms, a family relationship.

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<sup>17</sup> In terms of the fifth culture dimension “long-/short-term orientation”, Egypt is placed within the “*Muslim countries cluster*” (Hofstede & Bond 1988; Hofstede 1991).

- **Short- term Orientation**

Egypt seems to be oriented towards traditions and face. Too much respect for a short term orientation in Egypt impedes innovation. Egyptian people consider that what they have had in the past and have now in the present are more important than what they will have in the future.

### **5.2.2 National Culture Characteristics of the Netherlands**

- **Small Power Distance**

In the Netherlands, people are more or less treated as equals. Dutch laws have been conceived to serve this equality by treating everyone as equals regardless of status, wealth and power. In the Netherlands, relationships with others are not dependent on status; formal respect and deference are seldom shown (Feng 2004, Hofstede 1991, Oudenhoven 1998). There is an ideal of personal independence within society. In working places in the Netherlands, subordinates and supervisors consider each other as existentially equal: inequality exists just for managerial roles and these roles may be changed. Further, Dutch organizations tend to be decentralized with flat hierarchies and limited number of supervisory personnel.

- **Weak Uncertainty Avoidance**

In the Netherlands, uncertainty is a normal feature of Dutch life and each day is accepted as it comes. Dutch people are comfortable in ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks. Further, Dutch people pride themselves that many problems in their society can be solved without formal rules (Feng 2004, Hofstede 1991, Oudenhoven 1998). However, while rules in the Netherlands are less numerous comparing with Egyptian situation; they are generally more respected by Dutch people. The Dutch people are more likely to stimulate basic innovations as they maintain a greater tolerance towards deviant ideas than Egyptians.

- **Individualism**

Dutch people, as they grow up, soon learn to think of themselves as “*I*”, or “*Ik*” the in Dutch language. This *Ik*, their personal identity, is distinct from others people’s *Ik*’s. In the Netherlands, relationships among Dutch people are not obvious and prearranged; they are voluntary and have to be carefully fostered. Dutch children are expected to leave the parental home as soon as they finish their education and the healthy person in Dutch society is supposedly not dependent on a group. The Dutch government considers both boys and girls financially independent from the age of 18 by giving them (not their parents) a direct allowance for their education. In the work places in the Netherlands, employees are expected to act according to their individual interests and as a result, work should be organized in such a way that this self-interest and the employer’s interest coincide. Further, the relationship between employers and employees is seen as a business transaction.

- **Long-term Orientation**

Dutch people are willing to delay satisfying their needs in the short-term for benefits in the future. The concept of having a sense of shame, supports interrelatedness through sensitivity to social contacts and stresses on keeping one’s commitments.

To conclude, the Egyptian and the Dutch national cultures represent two distinct cultural contexts in terms of the four culture dimensions used in the prototype model (M0). See Figure 5.1.

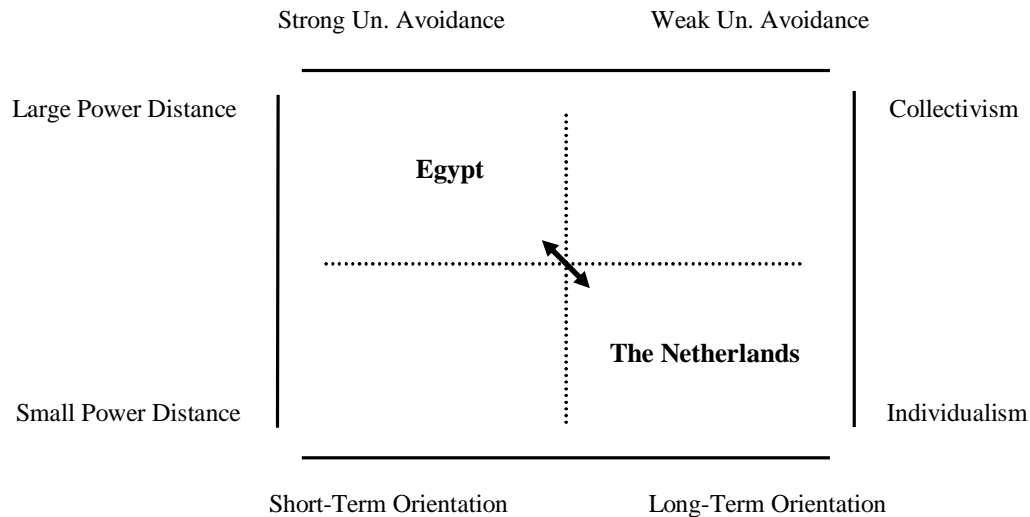


Figure 5.1 A Profile of Cultural Differences between Egypt and the Netherlands

### 5.3 The First Empirical Evaluation of the Prototype Model (M0)

The first empirical evaluation of the prototype model (M0) tries to uncover the mechanisms through which each national culture dimension affects each service quality gap. As already outlined, the hotel providers that have been chosen in this research are situated in two very distinct cultures (Egyptian and Dutch). The stages of the first empirical evaluation were:

1) Describing the service quality behaviors and practices adopted by each hotel provider (Egyptian and Dutch managers and service employees) in order to close/eliminate the four internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). To achieving this, twelve empirical examples or pieces of evidence are presented (three examples for each service quality gap) from both the Egyptian and Dutch hotel case studies as illustrated Figure 5.2.1. Further, each empirical example is coded in terms of the *Extended Gaps Model* of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1988, 1990).

Service Quality \ National Culture	Gap 1 1,2,3	Gap 2 4,5,6	Gap 3 7,8,9	Gap 4 10,11,12

Describing Service Quality Gaps in each Hotel Case  
 ↓                      ↓                      ↓                      ↓

Figure 5.2 First Step in Evaluating the Prototype Model (M0)

2) Describing the national culture's values and beliefs (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long-/short-term orientation) for each hotel provider (managers and service employees). Here, another twelve empirical examples are presented (three examples for each cultural dimension) from both the Egyptian and Dutch hotels as



illustrated in Figure 5.2.2. This time, each empirical example is coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1980, 1991).

National Culture \ Service Quality		Gap 1	Gap 2	Gap 3	Gap 4
		1,2,3	4,5,6	7,8,9	10,11,12
Power Distance	13,14,15	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uncertainty Avoidance	16,17,18	_____	_____	_____	_____
Individualism/Collectivism	19,20,21	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lo/Sh. Term Orientation	22,23,24	_____	_____	_____	_____

Describing National Culture Dimensions in each Hotel Case

Figure 5.2.1 Second Step in Evaluating the Prototype Model (M0)

3) Completing the prototype model (M0) schema by adding the expected mechanisms through which each national culture dimension affects each service quality gap as illustrated in Figure 5.2.3. In doing so, the 24 examples from each hotel case studies are coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture.

National Culture \ Service Quality		Gap 1	Gap 2	Gap 3	Gap 4
		1,2,3	4,5,6	7,8,9	10,11,12
Power Distance	13,14,15	13 / 1,2,3	14 / 5 for instance	??	
Uncertainty Avoidance	16,17,18				
Individualism/Collectivism	19,20,21				
Lo/Sh. Term Orientation	22,23,24				

Figure 5.2.2 Third Step in Evaluating the Prototype Model (M0)

4) Finally, the two hotel case study results are compared in order to discover similarities and differences that can be used in identifying and then summarizing the effects of each national culture dimension on each service quality gap. In this way, an improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations can be achieved as illustrated in Figure 5.2.4.

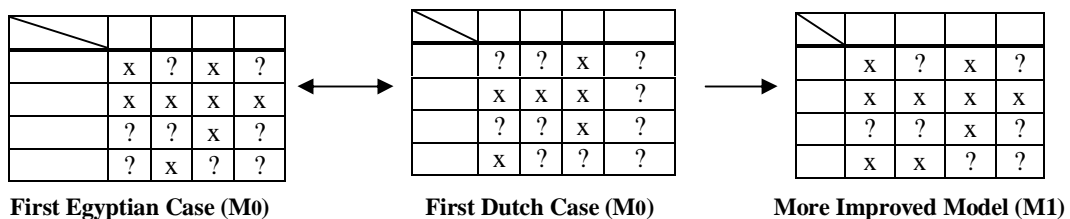


Figure 5.2.3 A Final Step in the First Empirical Evaluation An Improved Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations (M1)

Besides observations and studying documents, interviews were the main data source for gaining empirical evidence within each hotel case study. As a basis for these interviews, guideline questions were discussed with hotel managers and frontline service employees as the chief respondents. Each respondent was asked to describe the current service quality

behaviors and practices in his/her hotel, and finally his/her national culture values and beliefs. The interview questions are presented in Appendix 1. In the following sections, the first two hotel case studies (Egyptian and Dutch) are discussed starting with the Egyptian one.

## 5.4 The First Egyptian Hotel Case Study (EG)

### 5.4.1 Introduction

For research ethics and as requested by the hotel owner, the hotel name is not identified, kept confidential, and is referred to as the EG hotel case<sup>18</sup>. The case description starts with an overview of the hotel as an introduction followed by an extensive description of the two studied elements: 1) service quality practices related to the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4), and 2) national culture values and beliefs in terms of the four national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long/short-term orientation). By presenting these two studied elements, the research approach is to show significant empirical examples of each element.

The EG hotel was established in 1983 as a part of an Egyptian group, that is known for its vast expertise in the world of tourism and hotel services. The EG hotel offers a wide range of hotel services. There are 220 fully refurbished rooms and suites are exceptionally designed and equipped for the guests' comfort and enjoyment. Other supporting services such as business centre, coffee shop, oriental café, and swimming pool are also available. For executives and business visitors the EG hotel offers equipments and communication tools allowing them to use computers, the Internet and facsimile services.

The EG hotel study started in January 2005 with a preliminary meeting with the general manager of the hotel. This first meeting was planned as a general introduction to the research and its aims. Following this, thirteen interviews were carried out with the: general manager (as an interviewee), the accounting & financial manager, the marketing & sales manager, the human resource manager, the front office manager, the food & beverage manager, the housekeeping manager, three frontline service employees (one from hotel reception, one from housekeeping and one from the hotel restaurant) and finally three senior supervisors from the same departments. In addition, empirical observations covered three hotel areas: the hotel reception, the restaurant and some of hotel rooms. Finally, various formal documents were also collected and two meeting with random hotel guests were conducted. In the following sections, some key features that describe the internal service quality gaps and national culture dimensions are discussed. The EG's *Examples* are openly coded as EG 1, EG 2, EG 3 ...EG 24. The EG 1 code refers to first example of the first service quality gap (Information Gap1). The EG 2 code refers to the second example of the first service quality gap, and, finally, the EG 24 code refers to the third example of the final culture dimension short-term orientation.

### 5.4.2 Service Quality Gaps:

In gaining empirical data about service quality behaviors and practices in the EG hotel case study, the focus was wide ranging: how did EG members (manager and service employees) behave and what did they practice to deliver quality service to their hotel guests? Which criteria did they use in delivering high service quality? Which problems did they tackle to control or improve the quality of their service? The dialogue with EG members provided a wealth of empirical examples concerning service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). The following discussion details the service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) in terms of "*Examples*" that describe how EG as a provider (managers and service employees) close/eliminate the four internal gaps. In other words, the examples describe what the interviewees are saying and how they

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<sup>18</sup> All hotel names have been replaced with codes in this research.

view it. With these examples there is an attempt to understand how interviewees are interpreting certain behaviors, events and practices concerning service quality:

- **Service Quality Gap 1**

**Example (EG 1):** According to the EG general manager, *“the hotel management does not continually carry out marketing research to obtain information about the hotel guests’ expectations as these expectations are always uncertain and unpredictable ... but generating and searching for guests information is conducted internally and formally communicated regarding the EG rules and procedures. A formal weekly meeting is carried out to discuss the problems and comments of our guests”*. Furthermore, he stated that *“of course, as this kind of guest information is considered important for reducing uncertainty in guests’ expectations and needs, it should be discussed in formal and official ways”*.

**Example (EG 1) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53)

- **Marketing research orientation:**  
Not continually carrying out marketing research.
- **Upward communication:**  
Formalization to generate, communicate and share guests information

**Example (EG 2):** The EG general manager also stated that *“the hotel has a chain of command with ten management layers, so the hotel managers do not often seek suggestions and ideas concerning the hotel guests’ expectations from frontline service employees”*. He continued; *“at the EG hotel, the used way for the frontline service employees to transfer guest information and comments is through passing this information, problems, and comments to their direct bosses or supervisors who in turn report to upper levels”*. Finally, the EG general manager concluded by saying that: *“it is expected and accepted by everyone working here that people in the top management levels have more information than people in the lower levels and this also means that more guests’ information is available in the top levels of our hierarchy”*.

**Example (EG 2) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Management levels:**  
Top-down structure (hierarchical) for guests’ information flows.

**Example (EG 3):** The marketing and sales manager, in answering the interview questions, stated that *“the hotel management does not have a real financial budget for regular guest expectations research as we consider such research as an uncertain investment simply because guests’ expectations are changeable and unpredictable”*. Based on his answers, the EG management mainly uses complaints and guest room questionnaires to gather information concerning the guests needs and requirements. Finally he stated *“regarding the hotel rules and formal procedures, the gusts’ complaints are always sent to the head of each department in order to communicate and discuss the most important service issues during formal department meetings”*.

**Example (EG 3) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53)

- **Marketing research orientation:**  
Not continually carrying out marketing research.
- **Upward communication:**  
Formalization to generate, communicate and share guests’ information

- **Service Quality Gap 2**

**Example (EG 4):** In the general manager’s point of view, service quality strategy is “*a top management view which is energized through achieving a certain profit and cost reduction*”. Further, he mentioned that the service quality strategy is a reflection of the current top & senior hotel management’s awareness and knowledge established through long experience in hospitality and hotel services. He stated that “*our strategic mission is providing and delivering unique and professional services with low costs and high profits and letting hotel guests discover real hospitality at the EG hotel*”. Giving an example of strategic goal, he stated : “*the hotel owners have decided to follow an annual renovation plan for the hotel building based on renovating a floor each year, and of course there are a lot of hands down who implement these renovative specifications*”.

**Example (EG 4) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990,p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to internal goals; cost reduction, and profit.
- **Standardization:**  
Service quality standards emphasize on cost reduction and profit as main strategic goals.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside-out in setting service quality standards.  
Service quality strategy is built based on internal experiences.  
Service quality goals are operational and short-term oriented.

**Example (EG 5):** The accounting & financial manager commented “*there are two strategic objectives or goals in our hotel: first achieving an annual profit more than the year before or at least the same, second cost reduction*”. This strategic focus is additionally illustrated in the following statement: “*with a significant use of annual business-driven measures for the hotel management performance, the cost reduction and annual profit are the main committed targets that can be measured and tracked in order to reduce business uncertainty*”. He continued; “*the explicit goal at the EG hotel is to be “the excellent luxury hotel in Egypt” but this implicitly means profits and cost reductions for the current year*”. Finally, he indicated that “*not achieving the annual hotel target means entering a dangerous, or at least an uncertain situation in general and specially with the hotel owners or stakeholders*”.

**Example (EG 5) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to the hotel is internal goals; cost reduction, and profit.
- **Standardization:**  
Service quality standards emphasize on cost reduction and profit as the main strategic goals.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside-out in setting service quality goals.  
Service quality strategy is built on internal experiences.  
Service quality goals are more operational and short term.

**Example (EG 6):** in the view of the food & beverage manager, “*most hotel service tasks are routinized, such as those needed for delivering a meal to guests in their rooms or in the hotel restaurant*”. He additionally stated that “*by doing so, the hotel service standards and specifications are easily accomplished by frontline service employees such as restaurant waiters*”. In terms of his answers, the EG top management sets a service quality strategy

towards internal efficiencies (such as low food costs) in order to achieve consistent food and beverage services for all hotel guests during the year. Finally, he concluded that “*reducing the annual cost in our department is a reality, which quickly indicates that our staff are performing well regarding the hotel goals and main strategy in this year and also for previous years*”.

**Example (EG 6) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel internal goals; cost reduction, and profit.
- **Standardization:**  
Service quality standards emphasize on cost reduction and profit as main strategic goals.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside-out in setting service quality goals.  
Service quality strategy is built on internal experiences.  
Service quality goals are operational and short term.

- **Service Quality Gap 3**

**Example (EG 7):** A cleaning lady in the housekeeping department stated that “*people in our EG hotel are utilized in doing their tasks and jobs like raw material, because of that the hotel management always hire people who can closely follow the boss and achieve the hotel formal rules and policies*”. The cleaner continued: “*satisfying the hotel guests can be certainly accomplished by one of two options; a decision from the boss or following the hotel’s formal rules*”. Further, she stated, “*I always hear the housekeeping manager complaining by saying that hotel cleaners give out too many cleaned towels by giving extra towels to guests who ask for them, so I always see what should formally be done before giving the guests extra towels in order to avoid any uncertain or ambiguous cleaning situations with those guests*”.

**Example (EG 7) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Role conflict:**  
High conflict in terms of satisfying hotel rules, bosses and guests.
- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection or hiring of hotel members involves following hotel formal rules and systems.  
Subjective job descriptions.
- **Perceived control:**  
Centralization and no empowerment.  
Direct and tight control.

**Example (EG 8):** A receptionist stated that “*concerning the performance evaluation process, the immediate supervisor directly evaluates and judges his/her subordinates’ performance but often he/she [the supervisor] does not like someone and gives this person a bad evaluation. As a result, I prefer to work within a group of colleagues in order to avoid such performance evaluation behaviors*”. The receptionist added that “*the EG hotel management always hires people who are well known such as people who have a family background in the hotel*”. Finally, the receptionist concluded that “*even the evolution and reward systems go in the same direction as personnel relationships*”.

**Example (EG 8) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection or hiring of hotel members based on belonging to ingroup not on performed tasks.  
Subjective job descriptions.
- **Supervisory control system:**  
Relationship and group related performance criteria.
- **Teamwork:**  
Working as a team or group.

**Example (EG 9):** a waiter in the EG restaurant stated that “*in many cases, changing a meal for a hotel guest needs permission from my direct boss, simply because he/she is the only person who can say yes or no and finally decide what I can offer to the hotel guests*”.

**Example (EG 9) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.92-93)

- **Perceived control:**  
Centralization and no empowerment.  
Direct and tight control.

• **Service Quality Gap 4**

**Example (EG 10):** Related to communication issues, the restaurant waiter commented, “*within the EG hotel, the marketing & sales department often sells services, particularly new food and beverage services, before their actual availability and without having an exact date when they will be ready for serving!! So, sometimes, hotel guests know about a new menu before us as we are still working with the old menu, but we should accept this because it is the hotel rules*”.

**Example (EG 10) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across functions.  
Different procedures among departments.  
Frontline service employees have no input in advertising.

**Example (EG 11):** Based on an answer’s the EG marketing & sales manager; “*hotel advertising should show what hotel employees do but because people’s performance and behaviors are uncertain and cannot be predicted in the same way as machines that produce physical goods, so the hotel advertising is designed based on the marketing people’s experiences regarding the hotel’s formal rules and formal communications with other hotel departments*”. He added that “*breaking down the walls between my department [marketing & sales] and other hotel departments is uncertain and time consuming*”.

**Example (EG 11) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across functions.  
Formal communication channels.

**Example (EG 12):** The marketing & sales manager stated that “*marketing and front office executives are often in disagreement, each department members believe that the other departments make work difficult*”. He adds that “*we always hear people on the floor say [...marketing and sales people constantly promise more than we can deliver...]*”.

**Example (EG 12) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across functions.

### 5.4.3 National Culture Dimensions:

- **Power Distance**

**Example (EG 13):** One of the reception hotel employees answered “*it is impossible to consider my boss is equal with me, as I and my colleagues should get orders from him “do this and do not do that”, and, on the other hand, that we should report and raise information for him*”. Regarding to the EG receptionist’s answers, it is not acceptable for him to report or raise information for two supervisors or more as he added by saying that: “*in our hotel it is not acceptable to bypass my direct management level or go over or even around my direct boss and everyone expects and accepts that in our hotel*”.

**Example (EG 13) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Inequality of Power:**  
Inequality of power is expected and desired.
- **Hierarchy:**  
Hierarchy reflects inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs.
- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.

**Example (EG 14):** According to the restaurant waiter’s answers, he rarely expresses any disagreements with the restaurant senior captain, and when he was asked about the reasons he responded by the following statement: “*the restaurant captain certainly has precise answers and solutions for all guest problems that can be occurred during the daily working hours in this restaurant*”. The waiter continued stating that “*to get things well done in this restaurant, I look forward to achieving and accomplishing the solutions and decisions of my boss when I serve and interact with hotel guests in this restaurant*”. Finally, the waiter added “*compared with the restaurant captain, I, as a waiter, have little autonomy to control what happens with the hotel guests during serving meals and drinks for them*”.

**Example (EG 14) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses/supervisors.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.
- **Centralization:**  
Bosses always decide and order.

**Example (EG 15):** The hotel general manager answered a question by stating that “*it is very difficult to believe that hotel employees who carry out the manual work, such as the hotel bell man, are equal to those who do the office work such as a receptionist*”. Further, the general manager stated that “*the authorities of hotel managers and bosses are considered as key devices to influence service employees in order to achieve tasks*”. In his view, “*workers at lower levels in the hotel hierarchy are basically directed by others on higher levels. Hotel managers and senior supervisors constantly tell hotel subordinates, such as frontline service employees, what to do and how to achieve it*”.

**Example (EG 15) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Inequality of power:**  
Inequality of power is expected and desired
- **Hierarchy:**  
Hierarchy reflects inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs
- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses/supervisors.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance**

**Example (EG 16):** The housekeeping manager commented that: “*breaking hotel rules and regulations means entering ambiguous service situations by letting everyone [or even every department] do what they consider good and sufficient*”. According to him, unknown situations increase the stress, tension, nerves *etc.* upon the boss, and subordinates in encounters with guests. In his words: “*following the hotel’s formal rules and procedures are important in communicating, dealing with and finally solving the unpredictable expectations of hotel guests*”. Giving an example, the housekeeping manager said that “*if we, as housekeepers, do not know whether or not the guest expects the cleaning activities at 9:00 am, or later, it is quite safe to start at 9:00 am as the hotel procedures say*”.

**Example (EG 16) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (strong):**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations
- **Emotional need for rules:**  
Follow and respect rules.  
Rules reduce uncertainty.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened by unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous.

**Example (EG 17):** From the hotel food & beverage manager’s answers: “*most of the hotel’s resources in general and in the food and beverage department are targeted at achieving certain internal goals such a cost reduction in the food and beverage offered in our hotel*”. In his view, “*it is important, for me and of course for staff working in my department, to stick to and commit to this internal hotel target or goal in order to reduce the risk, uncertainty, and stress in this department in particular and within the EG hotel in general*”.



**Example (EG 17) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (strong):**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened by unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous.

**Example (EG 18):** The café shop waiter interviewed made it clear that he had been working at the EG hotel for ten years and did not want to leave the hotel for other opportunity in another hotel. His reason was, as he stated, *“working for another hotel means for me going to a new unknown workplace or uncertain working environment, so it is secure to stay working here in this hotel till I retire”*. He also said that, *“in order to perform well in my job as well as in servicing hotel guests, and finally in order to avoid any conflict within my job context, I and also my colleagues always follow the hotel formal rules and official regulations, and of course directions given by my bosses ”*.

**Examples (EG 18) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991,p. 125)

- **Uncertainty (strong)**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations
- **Emotional need for rules:**  
Follow and respect rules.  
Rules reduce uncertainty
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened from unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous  
Motivated by security and stability; accepting a career in a single workplace.

- **Individualism/Collectivism**

**Example (EG 19):** The human resource manager stated, *“working at EG the hotel is a good opportunity for all hotel staff members in general and for me in particular to acquire experiences, new talents and skills with all hotel employees and groups”*. For him, *“the hotel provides an office with air conditioning represents adequate workplace, especially in the hot weather of Egypt”*.

**Example (EG 19) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991,p. 67)

- **Management is management of group:**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral term.**

**Example (EG 20):** A cleaning lady stated *“I got the job in this hotel because my brother has been working in the same hotel for five years and the hotel management trusts him”*. Further, she added that *“My brother and I are working in the same department and in many cases, we*

*work in the same team*". More negatively, she added that she can be punished or fired if her brother made mistakes or misbehaved for the EG hotel.

**Example (EG 20) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of group**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral terms.**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions take employees' ingroup into account.**
- **Personnel relationships prevail over tasks.**

**Example (EG 21):** A restaurant waiter had been punished for mistakes made during delivering food and drinks at a wedding party and he said that *"for this party there were twelve waiters divided into two teams serving the guests, and I did my task well but the others may be did not"*. Nevertheless, the restaurant waiter prefers to work within the same team again rather switch to the other one. Finally, the waiter added that *"at the EG hotel everyone can be hired, promoted, or even fired based on his or her relationships with the hotel management"*.

**Example (EG 21) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.67)

- **Management is management of group**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Hiring and promotion decisions take employees' ingroup into account**
- **Personnel relationships prevail over tasks.**

- **Long-/Short- term Orientation**

**Example (EG 22):** A senior receptionist commented that *"my main goal in working at the EG hotel is to get a high monthly salary"*. He also stated, *"working in the hotel sector in general and with the EG hotel in particular, means more Egyptian pounds compared with working elsewhere"*. He continued by saying that: *"in Egypt with a high percentage of unemployment and economic recession, getting a job and good monthly salary are ultimate goals"*. The senior receptionist finally stated that *"even at the EG hotel level, the main management target is to achieve an annual profit and everyone is committed to the fact that the EG hotel should be financially successful every year"*.

**Example (EG 22) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
Financial benefits are quickly attained results or achievements.  
Respect for traditions and concern with face.  
Concern with possessing the Truth.

**Example (EG 23):** Another restaurant waiter said, *"the daily tips for me are one of the main reasons to stay in this job at this hotel"*. The waiter continued by saying that: *"working in a small job like what I do now in this hotel is better than being without a job"*.

**Example (EG 23) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991,p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
 Financial benefits are quickly attained results or achievements.  
 Concern with possessing the Truth.

**Example (EG 24):** The accounting & financial manager said that: “every year there is a direct or “fixed” increase in my salary”. Regarding to his answers, “if you, as external observer, compare my salary now and in the past you will understand what I mean”.

**Example (EG 24) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
 Financial benefits are quick attained results or achievements.  
 Concern with possessing the Truth.  
 Past and present orientation.

**5.4.4 National Culture - Service Quality Relations within the EG Hotel Case**

Using the last two streams of the empirical *Examples* (on service quality gaps and cultural dimensions), the expected mechanisms are presented partly in this section and more fully in Section 5.4.5 to add details to the prototype model (M0) scheme and fill-in its empty cells. Two coding procedures are followed: *1*) in this section, the 24 examples from the EG hotel case study are coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture; *2*) in the next section the empirical “*Examples*” that are here coded will be examined in an analytical sense in order to find adequate mechanisms that link them. In doing so, these examples will be broken down and reconstructed to form an interpretive version of the prototype model including linking mechanisms. I carrying out these two coding procedures, the axial coding techniques as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) are employed.

**The Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)**

The six power distance and Gap 1 codes (i.e. EG 13, EG 14, EG 15, EG 1, EG 2, and EG 3) refer to the prototype model cell number 1, 1 (column 1, row 1) as illustrated in Table 5.1. By examining each of these coded answered one can understand what the interviewee answered and how he/she interprets certain events, acts and outcomes. Thus, examining these six examples enables one to explain how the power distance dimension affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) within the EG hotel and through which mechanisms:

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,1)

**Table 5.1 The First Cell in the Prototype Model (1, 1)**

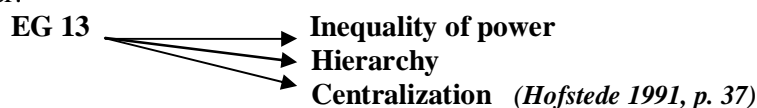
To begin, one can examine and analyse the EG 13 code. Here, the EG receptionist said:

1. “*It is impossible to consider my boss is equal with me*”
2. “*I and my colleagues should get orders from him*”
3. “*we should report and raise information for him*”
4. “*not acceptable to bypass ...my direct boss*”

Expressions such as *not equal, should get orders, should report and not bypass direct boss* can be classified into three categories of large power distance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these three categories are:

1. ***Inequality of Power***
2. ***Hierarchy***
3. ***Centralization***

Indeed, these categories reflect the large power distance that exists among the EG members such as the between supervisors/bosses and subordinates. Large power distance equals to large status differences between the supervisors/boss and subordinates within the EG hotel. This also means that subordinates are dependent on supervisors/bosses, and they expect to be told what to do. Finally, a large power distance means centralization in terms of supervisors who always decide and order.



Also, according to the EG 13 code, the EG receptionist said:

1. *bypass my direct management level*

The expression *management level* can be classified within one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) by using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. ***Management Levels***



According to code EG 14, the EG restaurant waiter said:

1. “*the restaurant captain certainly has precise answers and solutions for all guest problems*”
2. “*achieving and accomplishing the solutions and decisions of my boss*”

Expressions such as *certainly has precise answers and solution for all problems, achieving solutions of my boss*, can be classified into two categories of large power distance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. ***Dependence***
2. ***Centralization***



Also, within the EG 14 code, the EG restaurant waiter said:

1. *I have little autonomy to control what happens with the hotel guests*

Expressions such as *I have little autonomy to control what happens* can be classified within one category of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) by using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), this category is:

1. ***Perceived Control (less)***



From code EG 15, the EG general manager said:

1. “*very difficult .... are equal*”
2. “*are basically directed by others on higher levels*”
3. “*managers and senior supervisors...tell subordinates what to do & how to achieve*”

Expressions such as ***very difficult.. are equal directed, on higher levels, what to do and how to achieve*** can be classified within two categories of large power distance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. ***Inequality of power***
2. ***Hierarchy***

EG 15 —————> **Inequality of power**  
EG 15 —————> **Hierarchy (Hofstede 1991, p. 37)**

Also, according to the EG 15 code, the EG general manager said:

1. *workers at lower levels of the hotel hierarchy ... on the higher levels*

Expressions such as ***lower level, hierarchy, and higher levels*** can be classified within one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) by using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. ***Management Levels***

EG 15 —————> **Management Levels**  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

Moving to the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) codes, the general manager said in the EG 1 code:

1. “*is conducted internally conducted and formally communicated*”
2. “*a formal weekly meeting is carried out*”
3. “*it should be discussed in formal and official ways*”

Expressions such as ***internally conducted and formally communicated, a formal weekly meeting, it should be to be discussed in formal and official ways***, can be classified into one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) by using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. ***Upward communication***

In the EG hotel, the use of formal communications mean that the guests’ information is formally generated, shared and reported in order to close or eliminate the first service quality gap. It also means that that guest information is not generalized and easily obtained, but it can be used in the EG formal policies and procedures.

EG 1 —————> **Upward communication**  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

Also, according the EG 1 code, the general manager said:

1. “*these expectations are always uncertain and unpredictable*”
2. “*regarding the EG rules and procedures*”

Expressions such as ***uncertain, unpredictable, rules and procedures*** can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125), these two categories are:

1. ***Uncertainty (Strong)***
2. ***Emotional need for rules (Rules Oriented)***



According to the EG 2 code, the EG general manager said:

1. “*a chain of command with ten management layers*”
2. “*passing this information... to their direct bosses .. who in turn report to upper levels*”

Expressions such as *chain of command, ten management layers, passing this information, to their direct bosses, who in turn report to upper levels* can be classified into one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) by using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53), this category is:

1. **Management Levels**

The top-down management structure in the EG hotel means that the guests’ information is shared and reported within hierarchical levels. This means that guest information is not generalized and easily obtained, but it can be communicated within such a hierarchy.

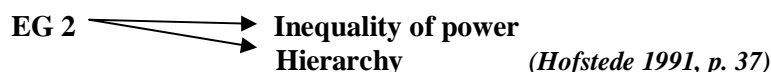


Also, the EG general manager said:

1. “*in the top management levels*”
2. “*people in the lower management levels*”
3. “*more information is available in the top levels our hierarchy*”

Expressions such as *in the top management levels, people in the lower management levels, more information is available, top levels our hierarchy* can be classified into two categories of power distance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. **Inequality of power**
2. **Hierarch**



Turning to the EG 3 code, the marketing & sales manager stated that:

1. “*send to...to communicate and discuss*”
2. “*formal department meeting*”

Expressions such as *send to, communicate, discuss, formal meeting*, can be classified within one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. **Upward communication**

Formal communications within the EG hotel mean that the guests’ information is formally shared and reported in order to close or eliminate the first service quality gap (Gap 1). It also means that guest information is not generalized and easily obtained.



Also, regarding to EG 3 code, the marketing & sales manager said:

1. “*such research as an uncertain investment...changeable and unpredictable*”
2. “*regarding the hotel rules, and formal procedures*”

Expressions such as *uncertain investment, changeable and unpredictable, hotel rules, and formal procedures*, can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by

using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Strong)*
2. *Emotional need for rules (Rule Oriented)*



**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)**

By examining power distance and the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes based on the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between large power distance and the first service quality gap (Gap 1). This relation is explained by linking codes EG 13 and EG 15 on one hand with EG 2 on the other hand inside the prototype model cell (1, 1) as illustrated in Table 5.1.1.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Information Gap 1 EG 2	
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 15	<b>EG 13 &amp; 15</b> Inequality Hierarchy Management levels	<b>EG 2</b> Management levels Inequality Hierarchy

**Table 5.1.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 1, row 2), the examination involves the codes related to uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap (i.e. EG 16, EG 17, EG 18, EG 1, EG 2, and EG 3) as illustrated in Table 5.2 below:

National Culture \ Service Quality	Information Gap 1 EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16, EG 17, EG 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,2)

**Table 5.1 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims to explain how uncertainty avoidance affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), and by which mechanisms. In starting with EG 16 code, the EG housekeeper manager said:

1. *“breaking hotel rules and regulations means entering ambiguous service situations”*
2. *“following the hotel’s formal rules and procedures is important...deal with unpredictable expectations”*

Expressions such as *breaking regulations, hotel formal rules, importance to deal with unpredictable expectations*, can be integrated into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Strong)*
2. *Emotional need for rules (Rules Oriented)*

From this perspective, the EG members have a strong emotional need for rules, policies and procedures that represent written arrangements to be respected and followed. For the EG members, many problems can be avoided by such official rules. Without such written rules and procedures, the EG members would feel that they are in ambiguous situations. Further, these rules make events clearly interpretable and predictable.

EG 16 → **Uncertainty (strong)**  
 EG 16 → **Rules Oriented** (Hofstede 1991, p.125)

Also, relating to the EG 16 code, the EG housekeeping manager used the phrases:

1. “*in communicate and share the information of guests*”
2. “[*or even every department*]”

Expressions such as *in communicating, [or even every department]*, can be classified in a single category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) and also in category of the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53, p.117), these two categories are:

1. **Upward communication**
2. **Horizontal Communications**

EG 16 → **Upward Communication**  
 EG 16 → **Horizontal Communications**  
 (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53, p.117)

In the EG 17 code, the EG food & beverage manager answered:

1. “*in order to reduce the risk, uncertainty and stress*”

Expressions such as *reduce the risk, uncertainty and stress* can be classified within two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **What is different is dangerous**

EG 17 → **Uncertainty (strong)**  
 EG 17 → **What is different is dangerous**  
 (Hofstede 1991, p.125)

Also, in the EG 17 code, the food & beverage manager used the phrases:

1. “*most of the hotel’s resources are targeted at achieving certain internal goals*”
2. “*such as cost reduction*”
3. “*to stick to and commit to this internal target or goal*”

Expressions such as *the hotel’s resources are targeted at achieve certain internal goals, cost reduction, stick to and commit to this internal target or goal* can be classified into two main categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73), these two categories are:

1. **Commitment to service quality**
2. **Goal setting**

EG 17 → **Commitment to service quality**  
 EG 17 → **Goal setting**  
 (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

Related to the EG 18 code, the café shop waiter said:

1. “*working for another hotel means for me uncertain working environment*”
2. “*it is secure*”, “*to stay.. till I retire*”
3. “*follow the hotel formal rules and official regulation*”



Expressions such as *another hotel, unknown, secure, to stay, till I retire, follow the hotel formal rules and official regulation* can be classified within two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (strong)*
2. *Emotional need for rules*

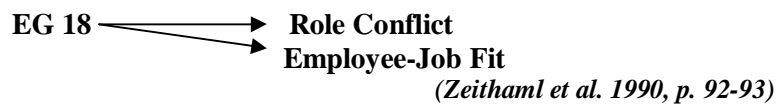


Also, the café shop waiter said that:

1. “*perform well in my job, as well as in serving the hotel guests*”
2. “*to avoid any conflict within my job context*”

Expressions such as *perform well in my job, in servicing hotel guests, to avoid any conflict within my job* can be classified within two categories of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. *Role Conflict*
2. *Employee-Job Fit*



### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

By examining the uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) codes, based on the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation is conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap. This relation can be explained by linking code EG 16 on one hand with EG 1 and EG 3 on the other hand inside the prototype model cell (1, 2).

National Culture	Service Quality	Information Gap 1 EG 1, EG 3
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16	<b>EG 16</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules  Upward Communication	<b>EG 1, EG 3</b> Upward Communication.  Uncertainty strong Need for Rules

Table 5.2.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

### The Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

Examining all the codes related to individualism/collectivism and the first service quality gap (i.e. EG 19, EG 20, EG 21, EG 1, EG 2, and EG 3) reflects prototype model’s cell (1, 3) as illustrated in Table 5.3.

National Culture	Service Quality	Information Gap 1 EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 19, EG 20, EG 21		<b>Model Cell</b> (1,3)

Table 5.3 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

Starting with code EG 19, the EG human resources manager said and stated that:

1. “*working at EG is a good opportunity for all hotel staff members*”
2. “*to acquire experiences, new talents and skills with all hotel employees and groups*”

Expressions such as *all hotel staff members, experiences, new talents and skills, employees and groups* can be classified within two categories of collectivism dimension by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these two categories are:

1. ***Management is management of group***
2. ***Employer-employee relationship is moral***

These two categories related to the collectivism values among the EG hotel members. They also show that EG hotel members highly value their group relationships. Further, the EG hotel staff members consider that improving skills, hotel facilities such as “*air conditioning*” as the EG human resource manager said, are very important in belonging to the hotel.



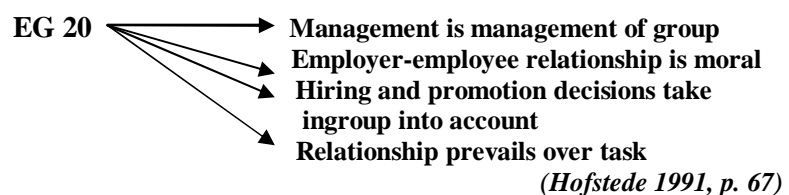
The EG 19 code does not provide any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Moving to the EG 20 code, the EG cleaning lady said that:

1. “*my brother has been working in the same hotel for five years*”
2. “*hotel management trusts him*”

Expressions such as *my brother, working for five years, trusts* can also be classified into four categories of collectivism dimension by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. ***Management is management of group***
2. ***Employer-employee relationship is moral***
3. ***Hiring and promotion decisions take ingroup into account***
4. ***Relationship prevails over task***

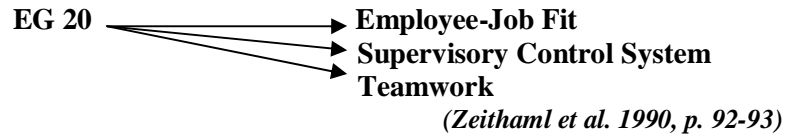


Also, according to the EG 20 code, the EG cleaner said that:

1. “*I got the job in this hotel*”
2. “*my brother and I are working in the same department ...in the same team*”
3. she can be punished or fired if her brother made mistakes

Expressions such as *I got my job, same department, same team, punished, fired, her brother made mistakes* can be classified into three categories of gap 3 (Performance Gap 3) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), these three categories are:

1. ***Employee-job fit***
2. ***Supervisory control system***
3. ***Teamwork***

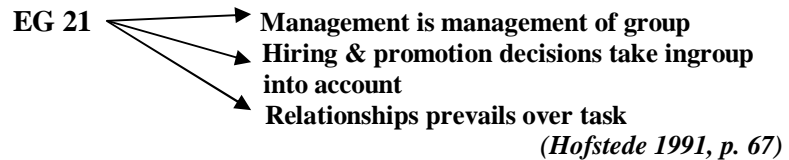


Finally, related to the EG 21 code, the restaurant waiter said that:

1. "... *there were twelve waiters divided into teams serving the guests*"
2. "*but the others may be did not*"
3. The restaurant waiter prefers to work within the same team again

Expressions such as *twelve waiters in terms of two teams, but the others may be did not, prefers to work in the same team* can be classified into three categories of collectivism dimension based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These three categories are:

1. *Management is management of group*
2. *Hiring and promotion decisions take employee' ingroup into account*
3. *Relationship prevails over tasks*



Also, the restaurant waiter said that:

1. "*I did my task well*"
2. prefers to work within the same team
3. "*everyone can be hired, promoted, or even fired based on his/her relationships with the hotel management*"

Expressions such as *I did my task well, same team, everyone can be hired, promoted, or even fired based on his/her relationships with the hotel management* can be classified into three categories of gap 3 (Performance Gap3) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 92-93), these three categories are:

1. *Employee-job fit*
2. *Supervisory control system*
3. *Teamwork*



### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

The examination of individualism/collectivism and the first service quality gap codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede's Culture Model reveals that there is an empirical difficulty in conceptualizing a relation between collectivism dimension and the first service quality gap. In other words, the collectivism codes cannot empirically explain why guest information is formally conducted, reported and communicated in line with a hierarchical structure within the EG hotel. Here, the collectivism within the EG hotel cannot empirically provide direct explanations for the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.3.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)**

To gain greater insight into the possible explanations for how collectivism affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), there will be an emphasis on this cell (1, 3) during the second empirical investigation when investigating the second Egyptian hotel (MIS).

**The Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

Taking into account all the codes of long-/short- term orientation and the first service quality (Information Gap 1), the examination of six codes (i.e. EG 22, EG 23, EG 24, EG 1, EG 2, and EG 3) contributes to the prototype model cell (1, 4) as illustrated in Table 5.4 below.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,4)

**Table 5.4 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

Regarding to the EG 22 code, a senior receptionist said that:

1. *“my main goal in working at the EG hotel is to get a high monthly salary”.*
2. *“more pounds compared with working elsewhere”.*
3. *“ with a high percentage of unemployment and economic recession getting a job and good monthly salary are ultimate goals”*

Expressions such as *main goal, high monthly salary, more pounds, getting a job, are ultimate goals* can be classified into one category of short term orientation dimension by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

**1. Quick Results or Achievements**

This category refers to the short-term orientation of EG hotel staff members. It also represents the short-term goals and needs that EG members aim for to achieve as a clear sense of their personnel stability. Here, the EG hotel members tend to be past-and present-oriented without a future-orientation concerning their achievements.

**EG 22**       $\longrightarrow$       **Quick Results or Achievements**  
*(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)*

Also, in line with the EG 22 code, the senior receptionist said that:

1. *“the main management target is to achieve an annual profit”*
2. *“every one is committed for the fact that.. financially successful every year”*

Expressions such as *main management target to achieve an annual profit, every one is committed for the fact that.. financially successful every year* can be classified within two categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73), these two categories are:

1. **Commitment to service quality**
2. **Goal setting**

EG 22 → Commitment to service quality  
 EG 22 → Goal setting  
 (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73)

In terms of the EG 23 code, a restaurant waiter said:

1. “the daily tips ... are one of the main reasons to stay in this job at this hotel”
2. “working in a small job like what I do now is better than being without a job”

Expressions such as *daily tips, main reasons, to stay in this job, in a small job, better than being without a job*, can be classified in the category of “*Quick Results or Achievements*”. As the EG 22 code, this category reflects the short-term orientation among the EG hotel staff members.

EG 23 → Quick Results or Achievements  
 (Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

The EG 23 code does not provide any assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990).

Finally, regarding the EG 24 code, the accounting & financial manager said that:

1. “every year there is a direct or “fixed” increase in my salary”.
2. “my salary now and in the past”

Expressions such as *every year, direct or fixed, increase, salary now & in the past*, can also be integrated into the “*Quick Results or Achievements*” category. In this category, the EG hotel members tend to be past-and present-oriented rather than future-oriented in their achievements.

EG 24 → Quick Results or Achievements  
 (Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

The EG 24 code does not provide any assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990).

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

The examination of short-term orientation and first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty in conceptualizing a relation between short-term orientation and the first service quality gap. Short-term orientation codes (EG 22, EG 23, and EG 24) are all classified in a single category, which is called “*Quick Results or Achievements*” and cannot fully explain the first service quality gap. In other words, the short-term orientation cannot directly explain why guests’ information is formally conducted, reported and communicated in line with the hierarchical structure within the EG hotel. In this case, the short-term orientation within the EG hotel cannot empirically provide possible explanations over the first service quality gap.

National Culture	Service Quality	Information Gap 1 EG 1, EG 2, EG 3
Short-Term Orientation EG 22, EG 23, EG 24		No Crosscutting Examples

**Table 5.4.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

To gain greater insight into the possible explanations as to how short-term orientation affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap1), there is an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (1, 4) during the second empirical investigation, particularly when investigating the second Egyptian hotel (MIS).

### The Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)

All six codes related to large power distance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (i.e. EG 13, EG 14, EG 15, EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6) contribute to the prototype model cell (2, 1) as illustrated in Table 5.5:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (2, 1)	

**Table 5.5 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

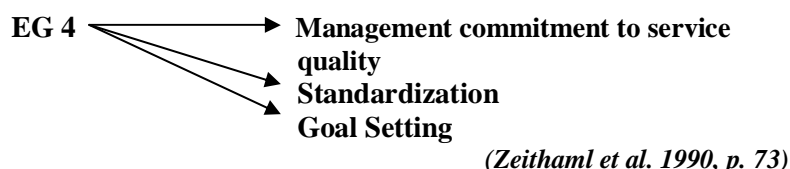
In terms of the EG 4 code, the general manager used phrases:

1. *“achieving a certain profit and cost reduction”*
2. *“unique and professional services with low costs and high profits”*
3. *“owners have decided to follow an annual renovation plan for the hotel building”*
4. *“a lot of hands down who implement these renovative specifications”*

Expressions such as *achieving a certain profit and cost reduction, low costs and high profits, owners have decided to follow an annual renovation and these renovative service specifications*, can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) by using the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*

In the EG hotel, the management’s commitment is to the hotel’s internal strategic goals and targets such as cost reduction and profit. Also, the service quality standardization emphasizes cost reduction and achieving annual profits. Finally, the service quality goal setting is an operational and top-down operation.



The EG 4 code does not provide any assessment or examination based on the Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

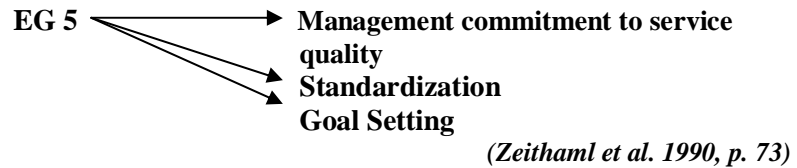
Turning to the EG 5 code, the accounting & financial manager used phrases:

1. *“there are two strategic objectives or goals: first achieving an annual profit ... second cost reduction”*
2. *“the cost reduction and annual profit are the main committed targets”*
3. *“implicitly means profits and cost reductions for the current year”*

Expressions such as *two strategic objectives or goals, achieving an annual profit, cost reduction are main committed targets, profits and cost reductions for the current year* can be classified within three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) by using the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*

Within the EG hotel, the top management’s commitment is to hotel internal goals and targets such as cost reduction and profit. Further, service quality standardization is aimed at cost reduction and increasing annual profits.



Also, in the EG 5 code, the accounting & financial manager said that:

1. *“that can be measured and tracked in order to reduce the business uncertainty”*
2. *“not achieving the annual hotel target means entering a dangerous situation”*
3. *“or at least uncertain situation in general”*

Expressions such as *can be measured, reduce the business uncertainty, entering a dangerous, uncertain situation* can be placed within two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty*
2. *What is Different is Dangerous*



In line with code EG 6, the food & beverage manager said that:

1. *“most of hotel service tasks are routinized”*
2. *“by doing so, the hotel service standards and specifications are easily accomplished”*
3. internal efficiencies (such as low food cost)

Expressions such as *tasks are routinized, hotel service standards, specifications, internal efficiencies low food cost* , can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) by using the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*

The service quality standardization also emphasizes cost reduction and achieving annual profits. Service quality goal setting is operational and some what top-down.



Also, according to the EG 6 code, the food & beverage manager said:

1. *“reducing the annual cost in our department”*
2. *“ is a reality, which quickly indicates that our staff performing well”*
3. *“ in this year and also for previous years”*

Expressions such, *reducing the annual cost, is a reality, quickly indicates, in this year and also for previous years* can be integrated into a single category of short term orientation dimension by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

1. *Quick Results or Achievements*

In terms of this category, the EG hotel staff members tend to be past- and present-oriented rather than future-oriented in their achievements or results.

**EG 6** → **Quick Results or Achievements**  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

The investigation of large power distance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty in conceptualizing a relation between large power distance and this service quality gap. Large power distance codes (EG 13, EG 14, and EG 15) fit within four categories (inequality of power, hierarchy, dependence and centralization) but these that cannot explain the second service quality gap. In other words, the power distance dimension cannot directly explain why EG hotel management’s commitment to service quality is internal in terms of cost and profit focus. Here, the large power distance within the EG hotel cannot empirically provide possible explanations for the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.5.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

To gain greater insight into the possible explanations for how large power distance affects the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2), an emphasis will be placed on this crosscutting cell (2,1) in the second empirical investigation when investigating the second Egyptian hotel (MIS).

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**

Prototype model cell (column 2, row 2), involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap (i.e. EG 16, EG 17, EG 18, EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6) as illustrated Table 5.6:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16, EG 17, EG 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,2)

**Table 5.6 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**

By examining these six codes the aim is to explain how uncertainty avoidance can affect the specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. These codes have been already discussed (EG 16, EG 17 and EG 18 on pages 87-89 and codes EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6 on pages 94-96) and so one can move straight to the findings below.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap codes using the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the service quality specifications



gap. This relation can be explained here by linking codes EG 17 and EG 5 inside the prototype model cell (2, 2) as illustrated in Table 5. 6.1.

National Culture / Service Quality	Specifications Gap 2 EG 5	
Strong Uncertainty Avoidance EG 17	EG 17 Uncertainty (strong) What is different is dangerous  Management Commitment Goal Setting	EG 5 Management Commitment Goal Setting  Uncertainty (strong) What is different is dangerous

Table 5.6.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

Prototype model cell (column 2, row 3) involves the examination of codes of collectivism dimension and second service quality gap (i.e. EG 19, EG 20, EG 21, EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6) as illustrated in Table 5.7:

National Culture / Service Quality	Specifications Gap 2 EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
Collectivism EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	Model Cell (2,3)

Table 5.7 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)

Again, by examining these six codes the aim is to explain how collectivism affects the specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The codes have been already discussed (EG 19, EG 20 and EG 21 on pages 90-91 and followed by codes EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6 on pages 94-96 and so one can move straight to the findings below.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of collectivism and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty in conceptualizing a relation between collectivism and the second service quality gap. The collectivism codes (EG 19, EG 20, and EG 21) were classified into four categories (management is management of group, employer-employee relationship is moral, hiring and promotion decisions take ingroup into account, and relationships prevails over tasks) that cannot explain the second service quality gap. In other words, collectivism dimension cannot directly explain why the EG hotel management’s commitment to service quality is internal in terms of having cost and profit focus. Here, the collectivism within the EG hotel does not provide empirical explanations for the second service quality gap.

National Culture / Service Quality	Specifications Gap 2 EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
Collectivism EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	No Crosscut Examples

Table 5.7.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)

There will be an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (2, 3) in the second empirical investigation when investigating the second Egyptian hotel case study (MIS). In order to gain greater empirical insight into the possible explanations of how collectivism affects the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

The prototype model cell (column 2, row 4), the examination involves the codes of short-term orientation and second service quality gap (i.e. EG 22, EG 23, EG 24, EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6) as illustrated in Table 5.8:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 4, EG 5, EG 6
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (2,4)	

**Table 5.8 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

Again, by examination these six codes the aim is to explain how short-term orientation affects the specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The codes have been already discussed EG 22, EG 23 and EG 24 on pages 92-93 and followed by codes EG 4, EG 5, and EG 6 on pages 94-96 and so one can move straight to the findings below.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

By examining the short-term orientation and the second service quality gap codes based on the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between short-term orientation and service quality specifications gap. Here, this relation can be explained by linking codes EG 22 and EG 6 inside the prototype model cell (2, 4) as illustrated in Table 5. 8.1.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 6	
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> EG 22	<b>EG 22</b> Quick Results or Achievements  Management Commitment Goal Setting	<b>EG 6</b> Management commitment Goal Setting  Quick Results or Achievements	

**Table 5.8.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)**

Examining prototype model cell (column 3, row 1) involves the codes for power distance and the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) (i.e. EG 13, EG 14, EG 15, EG 7, EG 8, and EG 9) as illustrated in Table 5.9:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> EG 7, EG 8, EG 9
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (3,1)	

**Table 5.9 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)**

The examination of these six codes aims to explain how large power distance affects the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. The examination starts with EG 7 code.

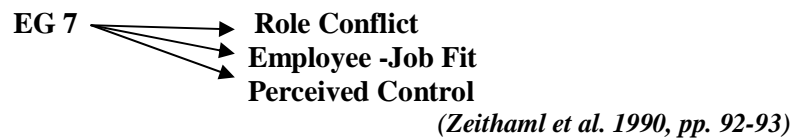
Within the EG 7 code, the cleaning lady said:

1. “*people ..are utilized in doing their tasks and jobs like raw material*”
2. “*hire people ... closely follow the boss and achieve the hotel formal rules and policies*”
3. “*satisfying the hotel guests can be certainly accomplished by one of two options; a decision from the boss or following the hotel’s formal rules*”
4. “*see what should formally be done*”

Expressions such as *people are utilized in doing their tasks and jobs, raw material, hire people , closely follow the boss and achieve the hotel formal rules and policies , should formally be done* can be placed within three categories of service quality performance gap by using the Extended Gap model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, pp. 92-93). These categories are:

1. **Role Conflict**
2. **Employees-Job Fit**
3. **Perceived Control (less)**

These service quality categories reflect the high conflict existing between satisfying the hotel rules or/and hotel supervisors/bosses, and satisfying hotel guests. Within the EG hotel, the selection process for hotel staff members follows formal rules and systems. Finally, centralization and direct and tight control are also clear.



Also, related to the EG 7 code, the cleaning lady said that:

1. “*achieve the hotel formal rules and policies*”
2. “*certainly accomplished*”
3. “*following the hotel’s formal rules*”
4. “*what should formally be done*”
5. “*to avoid any uncertain or ambiguous situations*”

Expressions such as *hotel formal rules, policies, certainly accomplished, should formally be done, any uncertain or ambiguous situations* can be placed in two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance by using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991,p. 125) these two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (Strong)**
2. **Need for Rules**



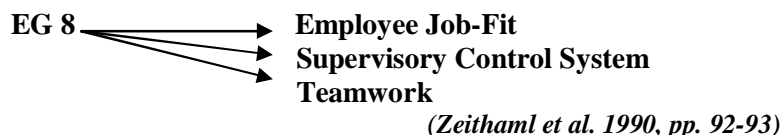
Turning to the EG 8, a receptionist said that:

1. “*the immediate supervisor directly evaluates and judges subordinates’ performance*”
2. “*he/she [supervisor] does not like someone*”
3. “*gives this person bad evaluation*”
4. “*work within a group of colleagues*”
5. “*in order to avoid such performance evaluation behaviors*”
6. “*hotel management always hires people who well known ... family background*”

Expressions such as *evaluates, judges, performance, does not like someone, bad performance evaluation, work within a group, avoid such performance evaluation behaviors, and always hires people who well known ... family background* can be classified within three categories of service quality performance gap, these categories are:

1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*
3. *Teamwork*

As with EG 7 code, these service quality categories indicate that the selection process of hotel staff members belong to relationships and an ingroup and not to the performed tasks. Also, working as a group is the preferred choice of the EG hotel staff members.

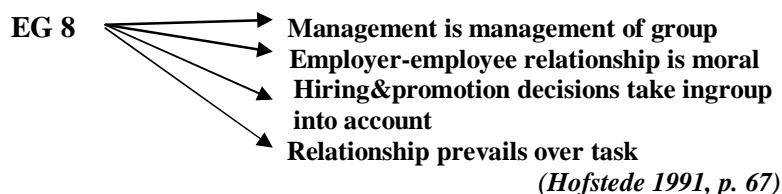


Also, under the EG 8 code, the receptionist commented:

1. *“does not like someone”*
2. *“I prefer to work within a group of colleagues”*
3. *“the EG hotel management always hires people who well known such as people who have family background in the hotel ”*
4. *“go in the same direction as personnel relationships”*

Expressions such as *does not like someone, work within a group, hires people who well known, family background, same direction of personnel relationships* can be classified within four categories of collectivism in Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. *Management is management of group*
2. *Employer-employee relationship is moral*
3. *Hiring & promotion decisions take ingroup into account*
4. *Relationship prevails over task*



According to the EG 9 code, a waiter said that:

1. *“changing a meal for a guest needs permission from my direct boss”*
2. *“he/ she the only person who can say yes or no”*
3. *“finally decides”*

Expressions such as *needs permission from my direct boss, only person who can say yes or no, finally decides* can be classified in a single category of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990 pp. 92.93), this category is

1. *Perceived Control (less)*



Also, expressions such as *needs permission from the boss, only one who can say yes or no, finally decides* can be classified in two categories of large power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture, these categories are:

1. **Centralization**
2. **Dependence**

These categories refer to the large power distance that exists within the EG such as that between supervisors/bosses and subordinates. The large power distance reflects status differences between the boss and subordinates within the EG hotel. Subordinates are dependent on supervisors/bosses, and they expect to be told what to do. Finally, the large power distance reflects centralization in terms of having supervisors/bosses who always decide and order.



**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)**

By examining power distance and the third service quality gap codes based on the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between large power distance and this gap. This relation can be explained by linking code EG 14 and EG 9 inside the prototype model cell (3, 1) as illustrated Table 5.9.1.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b>						
<b>National Culture</b>	EG 9						
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 14	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">EG 14 Centralization Dependence</td> <td style="width: 5%; border: none; text-align: center;">⋮</td> <td style="width: 45%; border: none;">EG 9 Perceived Control</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Perceived Control</td> <td style="border: none; text-align: center;">⋮</td> <td style="border: none;">Centralization Dependence</td> </tr> </table>	EG 14 Centralization Dependence	⋮	EG 9 Perceived Control	Perceived Control	⋮	Centralization Dependence
EG 14 Centralization Dependence	⋮	EG 9 Perceived Control					
Perceived Control	⋮	Centralization Dependence					

**Table 5.9.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

Filling the prototype model cell (column 3, row 2) involves examining six codes for uncertainty avoidance and performance gap 3 (i.e. EG 16, EG 17, EG 18, EG 7, EG 8, and EG 9) as illustrated in Table 5.10:

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b>
<b>National Culture</b>	EG 7, EG 8, EG 9
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16, EG 17, EG 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 2)

**Table 5.10 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

Again, by examining these six codes the aim is to explain how uncertainty avoidance affects the performance of service quality and by which mechanisms. The codes have been already discussed (EG 16, EG 17 and EG 18 on pages 87-89 and followed by codes EG 7, EG 8, and EG 9 on pages 99-101 and so one can move directly to the findings below.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the third gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the performance service quality gap. This relation can be explained by linking codes EG 18 with EG 7 inside the prototype model cell (3, 2) as illustrated in Table 5.10.1.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 EG 7	
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 18	<b>EG 18</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	<b>EG 7</b> Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty strong Need for Rules

Table 5.10.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

Taking into account all the six codes related to collectivism and third service quality gap (i.e. EG 19, EG 20, EG 21, EG 7, EG 8, and EG 9) contribute to completing the prototype model cell (3, 3) as illustrated in Table 5.11.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 EG 7, EG 8, EG 9
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 3)

Table 5.11 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)

The examination of these six codes aims to explain how the collectivism dimension affects the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

From the earlier examination of collectivism and the performance service quality gap codes, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between collectivism and performance gap. This relation can be explained by linking codes EG 20 and EG 21 with EG 8 inside the prototype model cell (3, 3) as illustrated Table 5. 11.1.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 EG 8	
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 20, EG 21	<b>EG 20, EG 21</b> Management is management of group Employer-employee Relationship is moral Hiring & promotion decisions take employee’s ingroup Personal relationship prevails over tasks  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System Teamwork	<b>EG 8</b> Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system Teamwork  Management is management of group Employer-employee Relationship is moral Hiring & Promotion decisions take employee’s ingroup Personal relationship prevails over tasks

Table 5.11.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

Codes related to short- term orientation and the third service quality (i.e. EG 22, EG 23, EG 24, EG 7, EG 8, and EG 9) combine in the prototype model cell (3, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (5.12).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> EG 7, EG 8, EG 9
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (3,4)	

**Table 5.12 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

An examination of these six codes aims to explain how short-term orientation affects the performance gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. Codes EG 22, EG 23 and EG 24 were analysed on pages 92-93 and codes EG 7, EG 8 and EG 9 on pages 99-101.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

The examination of the short-term orientation and the third service quality gap (Performance Gap3) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a direct relation between short-term orientation and performance service quality gap. All the short-term orientation codes (EG 22, EG 23, and EG 24) are classified into one category labeled “*Quick Results or Achievements*”, and this cannot explain the performance service quality gap. In other words, the *short-term orientation* dimension cannot empirically explain why EG staff member performance is dominated by interrelationships and group-related criteria. Here, the short-term orientation of the EG hotel staff cannot empirically provide possible explanations for the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> EG 7, EG 8, EG 9
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>	

**Table 5.12.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

In the attempt to gain greater empirical insight into the possible explanations for how short-term orientation affects the performance gap, there will be an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (3, 4) in the second empirical investigation when investigating the second Egyptian hotel (MIS).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

Turning to all codes related to large power distance and the fourth service quality gap (i.e. EG 13, EG 14, EG 15, EG 10, EG 11, and EG 12), these potentially provide information on the prototype model cell (column 4, row 1) as illustrated in Table 5.13.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (4, 1)	

**Table 5.13 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

From an examination of these six codes, one hopes to be able to explain how large power distance affects the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. One can start with EG 10 code. According to this code, the restaurant waiter said:

1. *“the EG hotel marketing & sales department often sells services before their actual availability”*
2. *“without having an exact date when they will be ready for serving”*
3. *“so sometimes, hotel guests know about a new menu before us”*
4. *“as we still work with the old menu”*

Expressions such as *hotel marketing & sales department often sells services*, *actual availability*, *without having an exact date, for serving*, *hotel guests know before us*, *still work with the old menu* can be classified into a single category of communications gap based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117), this category is:

1. **Horizontal communication**

This category reflects the inadequate horizontal communications across the EG hotel functions and departments. It also refers to the different procedures among these departments and one way communication channels among the EG hotel functions and departments.

EG 10 —————→ **Horizontal Communications**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

However the EG 10 code does not include any empirical assessment related to Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991).

In the EG 11 code, the marketing & sales manager used the following phases:

1. *“the hotel advertising is designed based on the marketing people’s experiences”*
2. *“formal communications with other hotel departments”*
3. *“but breaking down the walls between my department [marketing & sales] and other hotel departments is uncertain and time consuming”*

Expressions such as *hotel advertising is designed*, *the marketing people’s experiences*, *formal communications*, *other hotel departments*, *breaking down the walls*, *uncertain and time consuming* can be classified into a single category of communication gap (Gap 4) by using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117), this category is called as:

1. **Horizontal Communication**

As with the EG 10 code, this category refers to the insufficient horizontal communications among the EG hotel departments. It also refers to the different procedures across these departments and the one way communication channels among the EG hotel functions and departments.

EG 11 —————→ **Horizontal Communications**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

Also, according to this code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. *“people’s performance and behaviors are uncertain and cannot be predicted”*
2. *“regarding the hotel’s formal rules and formal communications with other hotel departments”*
3. *“breaking down the walls between my department [marketing & sales] and other hotel departments is uncertain and it is time consuming”*



Expressions such as *are uncertain and cannot be predicted, formal rules formal communications, uncertain* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (strong)*
  2. *Need for Rules*
- EG 11 → **Uncertainty**  
→ **Need for Rules**
- (Hofstede 1991, p. 125)*

According the EG 12 code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. “*marketing and front office executives are often in disagreement*”
2. “*each department members believe that the other department makes work difficult*”
3. “*we always hear people on the floor say marketing and sales people constantly promise more than we can deliver*”

Expressions such as *marketing and front office, are often in disagreement, each department members, other department makes work difficult, always hear people on the floor, marketing and sales people constantly, promise more than we can deliver* can be classified into a single category of service quality communications gap based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117), this category is called as:

1. *Horizontal Communication*

As previously noted, this service quality category refers to inadequate horizontal communications across the EG hotel functions and departments.

EG 12 → **Horizontal Communication**  
*(Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117)*

The EG 12 code does not provide any empirical links to items in Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)

The examination of the large power distance and the fourth service quality gap codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation a between large power distance and the communications gap. The large power distance codes (EG 13, EG 14, and EG 15) fit within three categories (inequality of power, hierarchy, dependence and centralization) that are unable to explain the communications service quality gap. In other words, the power distance dimension cannot directly explain why EG hotel communications are inadequate across the hotel functions and departments. Thus, here, the large power distance within the EG hotel does not provide empirical explanations for the communications service quality gap.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>Large Power Distance</b> EG 13, EG 14, EG 15		<b>No Crosscut Examples</b>

**Table 5.13.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

In order to gain greater insight into the possible explanations for how large power distance affects the fourth service quality gap, there will be an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (4, 1) in the second empirical investigation of an Egyptian hotel (MIS).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

Prototype model cell (column 4, row 2) examination involves the codes for uncertainty avoidance and the communications Gap 4 (i.e. EG 16, EG 17, EG 18, and EG 10, EG 11, and EG 12) as illustrated in the following Table 5.14:

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16, EG 17, EG 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,2)

**Table 5.14 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of these six codes could explain how uncertainty avoidance affects the fourth service quality gap and through which mechanisms. The examination of codes EG 16, EG 17 and EG 18 took place on pages 87-89 and of codes EG 10, EG 11 and EG 12 on pages 104-105.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

By examining the uncertainty avoidance and the communications gap codes using the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the fourth gap. This relation can be explained by linking codes EG 16 with EG 11 in the prototype model cell (4, 2).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 11	
<b>National Culture</b>		
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> EG 16	<b>EG 16</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules	<b>EG 11</b> Horizontal Communication.
	Horizontal Communication	Uncertainty strong Need for Rules

**Table 5.14.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

In terms of the prototype model cell (column 4, row 3), the examination involves the codes of the collectivism dimension and of the fourth gap (i.e. EG 19, EG 20, EG 21, EG 10, EG 11, and EG 12) as illustrated Table 5.15:

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,3)

**Table 5.15 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

By examining these six codes one hopes to be able to explain how collectivism affects the communications gap and through which mechanisms. Codes EG 19, EG 20 and EG 21 were discussed on pages 90-91 and codes were also discussed on EG 10, EG 11 and finally EG 12 on pages 104-105.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of the collectivism and fourth service quality gap codes reveals a lack of an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a relation between collectivism and the communications service quality gap. Collectivism codes (EG 19, EG 20, and EG 21) are classified into four categories (management is management of group, employer-employee relationship is moral, hiring and promotion decisions take ingroup into account, and relationships prevails over tasks), which cannot explain the fourth service quality gap. In other words, the collectivism dimension cannot directly explain why EG hotel communications among hotel departments and functions were inadequate and formal. Here, the collectivism within the EG hotel cannot empirically provide explanations for the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>Collectivism</b> EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>	

**Table 5.15.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

In order to gain greater empirical insight into the possible explanations of how collectivism affects the communications service quality gap (Communications Gap 4), an emphasis will be placed on this crosscutting cell (4, 3) during the second empirical investigation of an Egyptian hotel (MIS).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

Taking into account all the codes related to short- term orientation and the fourth service quality gap, (i.e. EG 22, EG 23, EG 24, EG 10, EG 11, and EG 12) provides insights into the final prototype model cell (4, 4) as illustrated in Table 5.16.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>Short-term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	<b>Model Cell (4,4)</b>	

**Table 5.16 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how short-term orientation dimension can affect the communication gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes EG 22, EG 23 and EG 24 in pages 92-93 and followed by codes EG 10, EG 11 and finally EG 12 in pages 104-105.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of short-term orientation and fourth service quality gap codes reveals a lack of empirical relation between short-term orientation and communications service quality gap. All the short-term orientation codes (EG 22, EG 23, and EG 24) were classified into one category (quick results or achievements) which cannot empirically explain the communications service quality gap. In other words, the short-term orientation dimension cannot empirically explain why EG hotel departments inadequately communicate. Here, the short-term orientation dimension within the EG hotel cannot empirically provide possible explanations for this gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12
<b>Short-term Orientation</b> EG 22, EG 23, EG 24		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.16.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

In order to gain greater empirical insight into the possible explanations of how short-term orientation affects the communications service quality gap, an emphasis will be placed on this crosscutting cell (4, 4) during the second empirical of the second Egyptian hotel (MIS).

Figure 5. 3 summaries and presents the national culture - service quality relations as found within the EG hotel case study.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> EG 1, EG 2, EG 3	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> EG 4, EG 5, EG 6	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> EG 7, EG 8, EG 9	<b>Communication Gap 4</b> EG 10, EG 11, EG 12		
<b>National Culture</b>						
<b>Large Power Distance</b>  EG 13, EG 14, EG15	<b>EG 13, EG 15</b> Inequality of power Hierarchy  Management levels	<b>EG 2</b> Management levels  Inequality of Power Hierarchy	?	<b>EG 14</b> Centralization Dependence  Perceived Control  <b>EG 9</b> Perceived Control  Centralization Dependence	?	
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b>  EG 16, EG 17, EG 18	<b>EG 16</b> Uncertainty Need for Rules  Upward Communications	<b>EG 1, EG 3</b> Upward Communication  Uncertainty Need for Rules	<b>EG17</b> Uncertainty What is different is dangerous  Management Commitment Goal setting	<b>EG 5</b> Management Commitment Goal setting  Uncertainty what is different is dangerous	<b>EG 18</b> Uncertainty Need for Rules  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  <b>EG 7</b> Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty Need for Rules	<b>EG 16</b> Uncertainty Need for Rules  Horizontal Communication  <b>EG 11</b> Horizontal Communication  Uncertainty Need for Rules
<b>Collectivism</b>  EG 19, EG 20, EG 21	?	?	<b>EG 20, EG 21</b> Relation is moral Hiring&Promotion Management of Group Relation over Task  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System Teamwork	<b>EG 8</b> Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control System Teamwork  Relation is moral Hiring& Promotion Management of Group Relation over Task	?	
<b>Short-term Orientation</b>  EG 22, EG 23, EG 24	?	<b>EG 22</b> Quick Results or achievement  Management Commitment Goal Setting	<b>EG 6</b> Management Commitment Goal Setting  Quick Results or achievement	?	?	

**Figure 5. 3 The First Egyptian Hotel (EG) Case Study Summary**

### 5.4.5 Finding and Conceptualizing the Mechanisms within the EG Case

In this section, the task is to complete the EG prototype model schema with the found mechanisms through which each national culture dimension affects the various service quality gaps. This is possible because the 24 examples taken from the EG hotel case study have been coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture in Section 5.4.4. However, as summarized earlier in Figure 5.3 (p. 109), only eight model cells can be completed and filled-in at this stage.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (1, 1): Large power distance/Information Gap**

The placement of codes EG 13, EG 15 and EG 2 in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Hierarchical-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel staff members process guest information through hierarchical behaviors and practices in order to deal with (close/eliminate) the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1). Yet, the kind of guest information that is sought or heeded, and how the information is gathered, circulated and shared is likely to reflect the hierarchical behaviors and practices which are a result of the large power distance values shared by the EG hotel staff members (managers, supervisors/bosses and subordinates). For instance, the EG top and senior managers can be characterized as the most powerful hotel members, and thus they should acquire more guest information since this reflects their higher managerial positions than the less powerful hotel staff members (i.e. frontline service employees).

In other words, guest information is always embedded within hotel staff members, and those higher up the hotel hierarchy, i.e. senior management know more than hotel members on the lower levels. Furthermore, given the acceptance of the EG hotel management as a hierarchical structure, guest information may not be readily shared as it is viewed as personal not public. According to the EG hotel top and senior managers, guest's information which is widely distributed is useless. Finally, the hierarchical nature of the EG hotel's structure encourages guest information to be seen as a source of power, and therefore is not easily given a way to lower managerial levels.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (1, 2): Strong uncertainty avoidance/Information Gap**

The placement of codes EG 16, EG 1, and EG 3 in this cell indicates critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Close and Formal Driven Communication*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel members formalize their behaviors and also hotel procedures in communicating guest information. From the EG hotel's top managers' point of view, the formal behaviors and also procedures as well as the one-way communication channels are the practical way and workable behaviors to deal with (close/eliminate) the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

The culturally-driven strong uncertainty avoidance and need for formal rules encourage the EG hotel members (managers and service employees) to formalize their communication behaviors and also hotel procedures since they can be clearly spelled out, leaving little opportunity for doubt. In other words, the EG top and senior managers (and also their subordinates), would feel uncomfortable with differences between their formal behaviors and the practice (uncertain). In practice, the EG hotel has a multitude of written procedures and rules that should be followed exactly when exchanging and communicating information concerning guest's expectations and needs. Such formal communication behaviors and procedures reflect the high formal explicitness, which is important and desired to reduce uncertainty. Further, the formal behaviors and procedures within the EG hotel are also needed as the guests' information is highly embedded in service situations involving the hotel guests.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (2, 2): Strong uncertainty avoidance/ Specifications Gap**

The placement of codes EG 17 and EG 5 in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel top and senior managers internally focus on money (profit and costs) in setting service quality specifications and standards. For the EG hotel top management, the money-driven specifications of service quality represent the best behaviors and practical ways for dealing with (closing/eliminating) the second service quality gap.

Strong uncertainty avoidance encourages the EG hotel’s top managers to focus on the internal hotel objectives in terms of financial efficiency simply because this is easier to achieve, measure and track. Using money-driven specifications, the top managers have a tendency to assess their internal capabilities rather than assessing the external opportunity that is represented by achieving guest satisfaction. In other words, as the satisfied guests are difficult to guarantee, service quality specifications are set, and then committed to in terms of internal financial objectives. The EG top managers and also frontline service employees are always confronted with the uncertainty of what is happening outside their hotel and business environment, and they also have limited control over unexpected service situations or encounters with hotel guests. As a result, developing and setting service quality specifications based on internal objectives is a way to partly control and deal with the external uncertainty and ambiguity of satisfying hotel guests.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (2, 4): Short-term Orientation/Specifications Gap**

The placement of codes EG 22 and EG 6 in this cell implies that the previous mechanism, which was conceptualized as “*Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality*”, also applies here. This mechanism also fits the relation between short-term orientation and second service quality gap (Specification Gap 2). The short-term orientation that exists among the EG hotel staff members in general and top managers in particular, contributes to them being money driven in setting service quality specifications. Gaining money, in terms of profit and reducing costs, is clearly a result or outcome which can be rapidly measured and achieved in the short term.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (3, 1): Large power distance/Performance Gap**

The placement of codes EG 14 and EG 9 in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control*”. This mechanism describes how the EG frontline service employees deliver service quality through centralized control. With a large the power distance between the EG supervisors/bosses and their subordinates, centralization and tight control behaviors and practices are implemented in order to deal with (close/eliminate) the third service quality gap. Further, taking a decision to satisfy hotel guests and resolve their questions or requests is centralized involving the supervisors/bosses or the managers as the most powerful hotel staff members. In many service encounters, the EG frontline service employees have little control over how they behave and also what they practice with hotel guests simply because they, as less powerful members, can only perform while their supervisors/bosses, as more powerful members, have the power and authority to control this performance. In other words, the EG frontline service employees have little control in serving hotel guests simply because the authority to achieve specific outcomes for hotel guests lies elsewhere. In this respect, managers and supervisors/bosses are the only hotel staff members who are able to exercise the most powerful behaviors in delivering hotel services.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (3, 2): Strong uncertainty avoidance/ Performance Gap**

The placement of codes EG 18 and EG 7 in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*System Border-Driven Performing*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel frontline service employees behave and perform regarding the hotel systems and rules. From the frontline service employees’ point of view, formal systems and rules represent the main borders within which they behave and perform their tasks and when dealing with (close/eliminate) the performance service quality gap. The strong uncertainty avoidance, and the high emotional need, for rules encourage the hotel service employees to typically behave and perform as the hotel rules say they should in order to avoid ambiguous situations and to avoid any conflict or breaking of hotel rules. Further, one of the main performing criteria that the EG hotel management emphasizes, is the extent to which frontline service employees exactly follow the hotel systems and rules.

- **Mechanism of Model Cell (3, 3): Collectivism/Performance Gap**

The existence of codes EG 20, EG 21 and EG 8 in this cell implies a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel front line service employees rely on interrelationship and group coherence in their performance in order to deal with (close /eliminate) the third service quality gap. The mechanism is related to the approach through which frontline service employees perform their tasks and behave in delivering services to hotel guests. This mechanism is also related to hotel human resource management behaviors and practices in running employees’ selection, performance appraisal and reward criteria. In this respect, the interrelationship and group issues are the dominant performance criteria in the EG hotel managers and employees behaviors and practices simply because of the strong collectivism values shared among hotel staff members.

- **Mechanism of Model Cell (4, 2): Strong uncertainty avoidance/ Communication Gap**

Placing codes EG 16 and EG 11 in this cell indicate a critical mechanism which can be conceptualized as “*Close and Formal Driven Communication*”. This mechanism describes how the EG hotel staff members (managers and service employees) formalize their behaviors and hotel procedures in communications among the hotel departments and functions. From the EG hotel managers and service employees’ point of view, the formal behaviors and procedures as well as one way communication channels are the practical way and usable behaviors to deal with (close/eliminate) the final service quality gap. As with the first service quality gap, strong uncertainty avoidance and the need for rules also encourage the hotel managers to formalize their communication behaviors and procedures for the various hotel departments.

Figure 5. 4 below summarizes the mechanisms within the EG hotel case so far found.



Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
Large Power Distance	Hierarchical-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	?	Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control	?
Strong Uncertainty Avoidance	Close and Formal Driven Communication	Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality	System Border-Driven Performing	Close and Formal Driven Communication
Collectivism	?	?	Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships	?
Short-term Orientation	?	Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality	?	?

Figure 5. 4 The Mechanisms within the EG Hotel Case Study

Section 5.4 has extensively discussed the first Egyptian hotel case study (EG). Within the various subsections, the first Egyptian hotel case study has been explained in terms of collecting empirical evidence on both variables in the prototype model (M0): that are service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4) and national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long-/short- term orientation). From 24 empirical examples of the two model variables and by using the previously coding procedures, six mechanisms were found and summarized in Figure 5.4 in order to complete and fill-in eight cells of the prototype model schema. The EG hotel study served as the first case study in the empirical evaluation of the prototype model. As mentioned at the begging of this chapter, the purpose of this empirical evaluation round was not to test the prototype model (M0). Rather, the model evaluation concentrates on improving of the prototype model and beginning to fill-in the empty model cells. With a single case study, it is impossible to achieve a dramatic improvement in the prototype model. A second different national hotel case study is needed to achieve the desired improvement. Accordingly, the next section presents the first Dutch hotel case study (NL).

## 5.5 The First Dutch Hotel Case Study (NL)

### 5.5.1 Introduction

As with the first Egyptian hotel case study, the name of the first Dutch hotel is kept confidential and referred to as NL throughout. The NL case study description starts with an overview of the hotel followed by an extensive description of the two studied elements: service quality behaviors and practices for all the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4); and national culture values and beliefs in terms of the four national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long-/short –term orientation). By presenting these two elements, the research approach aims to highlight significant empirical “*Examples*” of each element. The Dutch hotel used was established at the beginning of the 1990s as a luxury hotel and is located in the centre of the Netherlands. The hotel has 64 luxuriously furnished, air-conditional rooms and suites. The hotel has a unique vision of the art of providing accommodation that embraces both the traditional Dutch decorative style and modern fashionable touches. From small to large events, the hotel offers a diverse variety of hotel services such as meeting rooms and banquet halls. The case study started in June 2005 with a preliminary meeting with the general manager who is also the

owner of the hotel. As with the first Egyptian case study (EG), the first meeting with the general manager was planned as a brief introduction to the research and its aims. Following, thirteen interviews were conducted with: the general manager (as interviewee), the accounting & financial manager, the marketing & sales manager, the human resource manager, the reception & reservation manager, the food & beverage manager, housekeeping manager, three frontline service employees (one from hotel reception, one from housekeeping and one from the hotel restaurant) and finally three senior supervisors from the same departments. In addition, empirical observations covered three hotel areas: the hotel reception, the restaurant and some of the hotel rooms. Finally, various related formal documents were also collected and two meetings with hotel guests were conducted. The *NL Examples* are openly coded as (NL 1, NL 2, NL 3 ....NL 24). The NL1 code refers to the first example of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1). The NL 2 code refers to the second example of the first service quality gap, and finally the NL 24 code refers to the third example of the final cultural dimension (long-term orientation).

### 5.5.2 Service Quality Gaps

- **Service Quality Gap 1**

**Example (NL 1):** the NL general manager claimed, *“within the hotel, there is regular marketing research of the hotel guests’ expectations. In conducting these we mainly focus on hotel guests’ needs, requirements and their long term relations with the hotel”*. In this regard, he considered that *“searching for guests’ expectations does not wait on the hotel rules or formal procedures and it directly started with the interaction with hotel guests and building long-term relations with them to gain their satisfaction and loyalty”*. He also stated that *“the NL hotel management informally tracks guests’ information, and, each day tallies and summarizes this and, finally, places them in many files that are accessible to all hotel staff members”*. He argued that *“this informal approach allows the top management to easily predict the key areas of guests’ expectations and make them quite certain to deal with”*.

**Example (NL 1) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Marketing research orientation:**  
Conducting regular marketing research.  
Vast firsthand guest information is obtained and generalized
- **Upward communication:**  
Informalization to generate, communicate and share guest information.

**Example (NL 2):** the NL marketing & sales manager stated that: *“best ideas concerning hotel guests’ expectations and needs informally come from frontline service employees”*. She also noted that *“hotel top managers and bosses/supervisors always communicate and stay close to their subordinates. By doing so, hotel guests’ expectations and needs can be easily predicted and certainly determined and dealt with as these expectations and needs usually come and normally happen every day”*. Her answers noted that, the NL managers and frontline service employees eat together in informal way the lunch every afternoon in the cafeteria where they exchange ideas and information concerning hotel guests. Finally she said that *“there are no formal rules or regulations to enforce this daily lunch but everyone like to participate”*.

**Example (NL 2) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Upward communication:**  
Informalization to generate, communicate and share guest information.

**Example (NL 3):** the NL general manager stated that “*direct interaction with the frontline service employees allows the hotel management to get suggestions and fresh ideas concerning hotel guests’ needs and expectations*”. He continued, “*my office on the first floor is always open for everyone, I want to be equal to the service employees on the first floor. The best way for frontline employees to transmit guest information and comments is to talk to their direct supervisors; or directly knock on my open door is also normal and accepted by everyone*”. He argued that “*to truly understand hotel guests’ expectations and needs, the hotel management should benefit from the flat structure, with only four levels, this facilitates hands-on knowledge of what really happens with the hotel guests*”. Finally, from his point of view, everyone working at the NL hotel is the same and equal in terms of accruing and conducting information concerning guests’ expectations and needs.

**Example (NL 3) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53)

- **Management levels:**
  - Flat structure for guest information flows.
  - Few management levels to facilitate guest information feedback.

- **Service Quality Gap 2**

**Example (NL 4):** The general manager stated that “*service quality standards are open to novelty and thinking big. By doing so, anything a guest wants is feasible with our flexible and pioneering standards*”. He believes that hotel managers as well as frontline service employees should see the guests’ demands as challenges not problems and innovative solutions are one way to achieve guest satisfaction. He added that “*technological standardization frees service employees from handling routine tasks and transactions. So, frontline service employees can then spend more time on personal encounters with the hotel guests*”.

**Example (NL 4) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**
  - Management commitment is to hotel guests’ expectations, needs and satisfaction.
  - Service quality strategy depends on a “*guest orientation*”.
- **Standardizations:**
  - Service quality standards emphasize on satisfying guests’ expectations and needs as the main strategic goal.
- **Goal setting:**
  - Thinking outside-in when setting service quality standards.
  - Service quality strategy is built on mutual internal and external experiences.
  - Service quality goals are strategic and long-term oriented.

**Example (NL 5):** from the NL general manager’s point of view, the hotel’s service quality strategy results from the brains of top, sales & marketing, operation executives and frontline service employees. All hotel staff members commit to the service quality strategies, standards and specifications. He said that “*by setting service standards and putting our money where our guests are, the senior management executives are doing more than simply talking profit and cost. Our strategic mission is guaranteeing our service quality for our guests’ satisfaction*”. In this regard, he considered that the service quality standards and specifications at his hotel reflected what his guests expected *i.e.* quick response, and innovative treatment. Finally he said, “*by targeting out service quality strategies, policies and then our resources*

on hotel guests' satisfaction, the other internal and organizational goals such as profit and cost reduction will be achieved".

**Example (NL 5) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel guests' expectations, needs and satisfaction.  
Service quality strategy depends on a "guest orientation".
- **Standardizations:**  
Service quality standards emphasize on satisfying guests' expectations and needs as main strategic goal.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking outside-in when setting service quality standards.  
Service quality strategy is built on mutual internal and external experiences.  
Service quality goals are strategic and long-term oriented.

**Example (NL 6):** The NL front office manager commented; "*the first service quality strategic goal is attaining the guest satisfaction in an innovative manner. The hotel management believes that commitment to service quality as a strategic goal is achieved through the guests' satisfaction*". In terms of her answers, as the NL hotel is market-driven organization, commitment to the hotel guest is apparent in everything that is done within the hotel. She continued "*the service quality strategies, standards and specifications are built on the fact that ... a hotel guest is not dependent on us... we are dependent on the guest ... our guests are individuals or groups or what ever who bring us their wants and needs in such a competitive and challenging business*". In her point of view, "*the main goal of the NL hotel in general and at front office department is to satisfy guests and, if they are not, we are certain and confident that they will be satisfied next time they stay with us because our hotel is innovative compared with others*".

**Example (NL 6) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel guests' expectations, needs and satisfaction.  
Service quality strategy depends on a "guest orientation".
- **Standardizations:**  
Service quality standards emphasize satisfying guests' expectations and needs as the main strategic goal.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking outside-in when setting service quality standards.  
Service quality strategy is built based on mutual internal and external experiences.  
Service quality goals are more strategic and long-term oriented.

• **Service Quality Gap 3**

**Example (NL 7):** A waiter from the NL Café stated, "*offering hotel guests a free coffee does not need permission from my boss*". Further, he said that "*at the NL hotel, my boss does not ask me how many free drinks I offer in order to satisfy a hotel guest*".

**Example (NL 7) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Perceived control:**  
Decentralization and empowerment to serve hotel guests.  
Indirect control.

**Example (NL 8):** A receptionist stated that, “*at this hotel, the hotel management always hires qualified employees, and then gives them the training programmes that they ask for. Also the hotel management finds new innovative ways to recruit and then develop lower-level hotel employees and finally gives them great flexibility and support to serve hotel guests. Nevertheless, hotel rules should also be respected*”. She noted, “*servicing and satisfying hotel guests are individual challenges that certainly need a new role in each new encounter with guests and greater self-rule or independence*”.

**Example (NL 8) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Role conflict:**  
Little job conflict.
- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection of employees to fit task and job to be achieved, and objective job descriptions.
- **Supervisory control system**
- **Perceived control:**  
Decentralization and empowerment to serve hotel guests.  
Indirect control.

**Example (NL 9):** A cleaning lady said that “*before starting working in this hotel, the hotel management provided me, and everyone working here, with self-development opportunities such as English language courses to help service employees to improve their ability and willingness to serve hotel guests*”. From her point of view, frontline service employees who have a chance to grow in their jobs are more likely to understand what they should do for hotel guests. She stated that “*in many cases, I can solve many room cleaning problems for guests without any discussion with my direct boss*”. She continued by saying that, “*and of course, the hotel management takes my individual performance into account when I am financially rewarded*”.

**Example (NL 9) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.92-93)

- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection of employees to fit task and job that should be achieved  
Objective job descriptions.
- **Supervisory control system**
- **Perceived control:**  
Decentralization and empowerment to serve hotel guests.  
Indirect control.

- **Service Quality Gap 4**

**Example (NL 10):** the marketing & sales manager said that, “*making hotel guests aware of all hotel services could improve guests’ service quality perceptions and satisfaction*”. She continued, “*hotel management teaches hotel guests how to use the hotel services well. Giving an example, she said, “the hotel management places a large screen in the grand Café showing kitchen chefs doing their works*”. Finally, she said “*hotel advertising that illustrates*

*actual employees in different departments doing their jobs can be very effective in communicating service quality excellence to our hotel guests”.*

**Example (NL 10) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**
  - Extensive communication with hotel guests.
  - Internal and external marketing.
  - Frontline service employees have role in advertising

**Example (NL 11):** a cleaning lady from the housekeeping department said that *“every morning before starting cleaning we get notes from other departments such as the reception desk informing us about any changes concerning our cleaning work”*. She gave an example by saying that *“for instance, if the hotel guests in room 44 do not want their room cleaning at 9:00 am and have told at the reception desk, we will be also informed and so we will not knock the door and disturb them at 9:00 am but go back later”*.

**Example (NL 11) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**
  - Extensive horizontal communications among hotel functions and departments.
  - Internal and external marketing.

**Example (NL 12):** the marketing & sales manager stated, *“on the one hand, pricing too low can lead to inaccurate inferences about the quality of the hotel service. On the other hand, pricing too high can create high guests expectations that may be difficult to match in service delivery”*. She followed by saying that *“in order to avoid such pricing traps, the marketing & sales department staff extensively and continually contacts other departments such as food & beverage or housekeeping”*.

**Example (NL 12) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**
  - Extensive horizontal communication among departments
  - Internal and external marketing.

### 5.5.3 National Culture Dimensions

- **Power Distance**

**Example (NL 13):** a cleaning lady said that *“in many instances I feel free to say a big NO and disagree with my boss and, in many cases, I decide what should be done for the hotel guests”*. She added, *“serving hotel guests in this hotel always needs more autonomy and perceived control over what occurs during service encounters with hotel guests”*.

**Example (NL 13) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Interdependence:**
  - Interdependence exists between subordinates and bosses
  - Subordinates expect to be consulted.
- **Decentralization:**
  - Bosses do not always decide and order.
  - Decentralization is popular.

**Example (NL 14):** a restaurant waiter commented, *“here at the NL hotel, it is difficult to call my supervisor or boss by his or her formal title or formal “YOU”. From his perspective, the focus is on the task that he does and his boss does. He continued by saying that, “it is normal to go with my questions and comments directly to anyone in the NL hotel when can help me to accomplish my task. For instance, I can discuss guests’ requests and comments with someone in another department or on other (higher or lower) managerial levels before I discuss it with my direct boss who may not have an answer to the requests”.*

**Example (NL 14) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Equality of power:**  
Inequality of power should be minimized.
- **Hierarchy of roles (flat relation):**  
Hierarchy means inequality of roles.
- **Interdependence:**  
Interdependent is existed between subordinates and bosses.  
Subordinates expected to be consulted.

**Example (NL 15):** the human resource manager stated that, *“the hotel has a flat system or structure that is designed so that roles and functions can be performed within an equal manner”.* In this regard, she considers that when top managers, supervisors and frontline service employees fulfill their functions or roles, they all will be the same and interdependent in dealing with guests’ expectations, comments and information. Finally she concluded that *“with the flat structure, when we say bosses and their subordinate, we mean an inequality of roles nothing more”.*

**Example (NL 15) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Equality of power:**  
Inequality of power should be minimized.
- **Hierarchy of tasks (flat relation)**  
Hierarchy means inequality of roles.
- **Interdependence:**  
Interdependence exists between subordinates and bosses.  
Subordinates expect to be consulted.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance**

**Example (NL 16):** a receptionist answered by saying that *“in an unexpected service situation, I booked a room for a guest at another hotel because our hotel at this moment was already fully booked”.* From his perspective, *“from the first day working here I knew that the hotel management emphasis on innovative service quality as an important target and goal in general, and in unexpected situations in order to satisfy hotel guests”.* Finally he stated *“similar to the hotel management, I am committed in performing my job to the same general goal and to serving guests in particular”.*

**Example (NL 16) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (high):**  
Innovation in performing the work.

**Example (NL 17):** A cleaning lady stated that *“even in the absence of hotel rules and procedures, once a service employee is confronted by an unexpected problem or ambiguous service situation, it is better to do something for the hotel guests rather than do nothing”*. In this regard, she considers that hotel employees should put more innovative value on doing rather than formally following the rules one confronted with unexpected needs or requests from guests. The cleaning lady also noted that *“If I see children’s stuff inside the hotel room, I put in extra towels than usual, as the guest may want more towels for the children and, at the end of the day, I will tell my boss and also my colleagues to do the same the next day”*.

**Example (NL 17) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations
- **Less emotional need for rules:**  
There are a lot of problems can be solved without formal rules.  
Not following a formal structure.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (high):**  
Innovation in performing the work.

**Example (NL 18):** A waiter at the NL restaurant stated that *“I have been working for the NL hotel for two years ago and I would accept a new opportunity to work for another hotel if that position added to my career”*.

**Example (NL 18) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations.

• **Individualism/Collectivism**

**Example (NL 19):** the NL human resource manager stated that, *“I was appointed here in this hotel based on the match between my qualifications and the requirements of the job that I perform. Hiring or even promoting an employee based on personnel relationships is nepotism and should not be openly admitted”*.

**Example (NL 19) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from the group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their own needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills**
- **Task prevails over the interrelationship**

**Example (NL 20):** cleaning lady answered by saying that *“in this hotel, the performance is measured using every output that is monitored and individuals rewarded based on the delivery of services such as an employees’ service behavior with the hotel guest (i.e. empathy, and friendly interactions with guests)”*. She clarified that the hotel management always ties compensation to those aspects of individual behavior which leads to high service quality. Finally, she added, *“at this hotel, service employees do not feel that individual*



*performance goes unnoticed and unrewarded. The hotel management recognizes everyone's efforts".*

**Example (NL 20) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from the group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their own needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills**
- **Task prevails over the interrelationship**

**Example (NL 21):** a restaurant waiter said that: *"service employees at this hotel are evaluated based on what they do rather than who they personally are, unless it can be demonstrated that personality is directly linked to service quality performance. From his perspective, "performance evaluation is a process of looking for objective performance data (facts) and involves an open, honest dialogue between hotel management and hotel employees"*.

**Example (NL 21) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from the group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills**
- **Task prevails over the interrelationship**

- **Long-/Short-Term Orientation**

**Example (NL 22):** a receptionist at the hotel commented that *"for me, working at the NL hotel is a great opportunity in terms of two main aspects: first getting my final education component finished as I can do my final research report here, and second acquiring a training opportunity as a receptionist to add to my career and future prospective "*.

**Example (NL 22) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**  
Long-term benefits are long-term achievement.  
Willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose.  
Concern with respecting the demands of virtue.  
Future orientation.

**Example (NL 23):** the marketing & sales manager said that *"I have worked at this hotel for many years and every year is considered as a new opportunity for career development".* She also said *"if the NL management lets me develop my career over the coming years, I will be interested to stay and work here in the future"*. She finally added that *"building a long-term relationship within this hotel can be empirically seen from marketing research. As a marketing & seals manager, I can say that the NL hotel management is always interested in building such long-term relationship with the guests through conducting continuous research into their expectations and needs"*.

**Example (NL 23) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991,p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**
  - Long-term benefits are long term achievement.
  - Willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose.
  - Concern with respecting the demands of virtue.
  - Future orientation.

**Example (NL 24):** regarding to a cleaning lady “*I consider myself as a hotel guest, when I am satisfied and have good a relationship with the hotel, I will stay- I mean work- at the NL hotel*”.

**Example (NL 24) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**
  - Long-term benefits are long-term achievement.
  - Concern with respecting the demands of virtue.
  - Future orientation.

**5.5.4 National Culture - Service Quality Relations within the NL Hotel Case**

From the above two streams of empirical *Examples* (on service quality gaps and cultural dimensions), the mechanisms will presented partly in this section and more fully in Section 5.5.5 to detail the prototype model scheme. In doing so, two coding procedures are applied as follows: Firstly, in this section, the twenty-four examples from the NL hotel case study are coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture. Secondly, in the next Section 5.5.5, the empirical “*Examples*” that have been coded will be analysed in order to uncover any mechanisms that link them. In doing so, these examples will be broken down and reconstructed to form an interpretive scheme for the prototype model with mechanisms. In carrying out these two coding procedures, the open and axial coding techniques, as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), are employed.

**The Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)**

Starting with the power distance dimension and the first service quality gap codes (NL 13, NL 14, NL 15, NL 1, NL 2, and NL 3), these six codes interact in the prototype model cell number 1, 1 (column 1, row 1) as illustrated in Table 5.17. Examining each of these codes involves understanding what the interviewee answered, and from this how he/she interpreted certain events, acts and outcomes. By examining these six examples one may be able to explain how the power distance dimension affects the first service quality gap within the NL hotel and through which mechanisms:

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL1, NL 2, NL 3
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13, NL 14, NL 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,1)

**Table 5.17 The First Cell in the Prototype Model (1, 1)**

One can start with the NL 13 code. According to this coded answers, the NL cleaning lady said:

1. “*in many instances I feel free to say a big NO and disagree with my boss*”

2. “*in many cases I decide what should be done for the hotel guests*”
3. “*servicing hotel guests always needs more autonomy and perceived control*”

Expressions such as *I feel free to say a big no and disagree with my boss, I decide what should be done for the hotel guests, always needs more autonomy, and perceived control* can be classified into two categories of a small power distance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. ***Interdependence***
2. ***Decentralization***

These two categories reflect the small power distance in the NL hotel. That is, the small power distance means small status difference between supervisors/bosses and their subordinates. It also means that subordinates and their supervisors/bosses are interdependent, and they expect (as subordinates) to be consulted. Finally, small power distance means decentralization in terms of supervisors/bosses not always deciding and ordering actions.

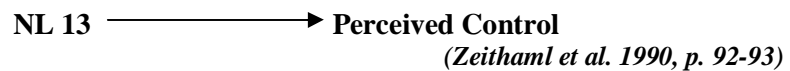


Also, according to the NL 13 code, the NL cleaning lady said:

1. “*I decide what should be done for the hotel guests*”
2. “*servicing hotel guests always needs more autonomy and perceived control*”
3. “*over what occurs during the service encounters with hotel guests*”

Expressions such as *I decide what should be done for the hotel guests, servicing hotel guests, needs more autonomy and perceived control, over what occurs during the service encounters with hotel guests* can be classified into a single category of the service quality performance gap (Gap 3) of the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), this category is:

1. ***Perceived Control (high)***



According to code NL 14, the NL restaurant waiter said:

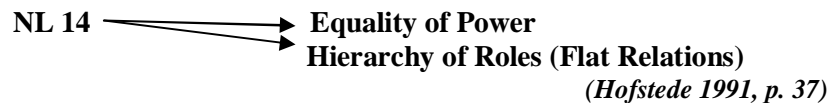
1. “*it is difficult to call my supervisor/ boss with his/ her formal title or formal YOU*”
2. the focus is on the task that he does and his boss does
3. “*it is normal to go with my questions and comments directly to anyone*”
4. “*before I discuss it with my direct boss*”
5. “*who may not have an answer to the requests*”

Expressions such as, *is difficult to call my supervisor/ boss with his/ her formal title or formal YOU, it is normal to go with my questions and comments directly to anyone, before I discuss it with my direct boss, who may not have an answer to the requests* can be placed within two categories of small power distance using Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. ***Equality of Power***
2. ***Hierarchy of Roles (Flat Relations)***

These two categories reflect the small power distance within the NL hotel. Small power distance means that the inequalities among the hotel staff members are minimized, and that only small status differences exist between the supervisors/boss and their subordinates. It also means that subordinates and supervisors/bosses are interdependent, and subordinates expect

to be consulted. Finally, a small power distance indicates a hierarchy of roles not of people. In other terminology, the relationships among NL hotel staff members are flat.



Also, according to the NL 14 code, the NL restaurant waiter said:

1. “*I can discuss guests’ requests and comments with someone in another department*”
2. “*or on other (higher or lower) managerial level*”

Expressions such as *I can discuss guests’ requests and comments with someone in another department, or on other (higher or lower) managerial level* can be classified into a single category of the first service quality gap using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. **Management Levels**



In the code NL 15 answers, the NL human resources manager said:

1. “*roles and functions can be performed within an equal manner*”
2. “*they all will be the same and interdependent*”
3. “*when we say boss and subordinate, we mean an inequality of roles nothing more*”

Expressions such as *roles and functions can be performed within an equal manner, they all will be the same and interdependence, when we say boss and their subordinate, we mean an inequality of roles nothing more* can be classified into two categories of small power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. **Equality of Power**
2. **Hierarchy of Roles (Flat Relations)**

The small power distance found within the code NL 15, has the same interpretations with the NL 14 answers on the previous page.



Also, according to the NL 15 code, the NL human resources manager said:

1. “*the NL hotel has a flat system or structure*”
2. “*in dealing with guests’ expectations, comments and information*”
3. “*with flat structure*”

Expressions such as *a flat system or structure, in dealing with guests’ expectations, comments and information, hotel flat structure* can be placed into one category of service quality information gap (Gap 1) using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. **Management Levels**



Moving to the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes, according to the NL 1 code, the NL general manager said:

1. “*within the hotel, there is regular marketing research*”
2. “*in conducting these we mainly focuses on guests’ needs and requirements*”

3. “*the NL hotel management informally tracks guests’ information*”
4. “*places them in many files that are accessible to all hotel staff members*”
5. “*this informal approach allows*”

Expressions such as *there is a regular marketing research, conducting, mainly focuses on guests’ needs and requirements, management informally tracks guests’ information, places them in many files that are accessible to all hotel staff members, informal approach allows* can be integrated into two categories of service quality information gap based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), these two categories are:

1. **Marketing Research**
2. **Upward communication (informal)**

The first category reflects the vast firsthand guest information that is obtained and conducted within the NL hotel case. It means also a long term or regular marketing research is carried out with the NL hotel case. The second category refers to that the guests’ information is openly and informally generated, shared and reported in order to close or eliminate the first service quality gap. It means also that that guest information is vastly generalized and easily obtained by the NL informal routines.



Also, within the NL 1 coded answers, the general manager said:

1. “*searching for guests’ expectations does not wait on the hotel rules or formal procedures*”
2. “*to easily predict the key areas of guests’ expectations*”
3. “*make them quite certain to deal with*”
4. “*their long-term relations with the hotel*”
5. “*building long-term relations with them to gain their satisfaction and loyalty*”

Expressions such as *does not wait on the hotel rules or formal procedures, to easily predict the key areas of guests’ expectations, make them quite certain to deal with, their long-term relations with the hotel, building long-term relations with them to gain their satisfaction& loyalty* can be put in two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance and one category of long-term orientation using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125, p. 173), these three categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (Weak)**
2. **Less emotional need for rules**
3. **Long-term Results**



Within the NL 2 code, the NL marketing & sales manager said:

1. “*best ideas .....informally come from frontline service employees*”
2. “*always communicate and stay close to their subordinates*”
3. eat together in informal way the lunch
4. they exchange ideas and information concerning hotel guests

Expressions such as *informally come from, communicate and stay close to their subordinates ,in informal way, exchange ideas and information concerning hotel guests* can be classified into one category of service quality information gap using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53), this category is:

1. *Upward communication (informal)*

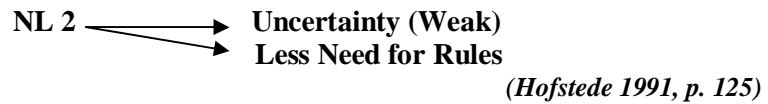


Also, according to the NL 2, the NL marketing & sales manager said:

1. “*guests’ expectations and needs can be easily predicted and certainly determined*”
2. “*as these expectations and needs usually come and normally happen every day*”
3. “*no formal rules or regulations to enforce this daily lunch*”

Expressions such as *easily predicted and certainly determined come, and normally happen every day, no formal rules or regulations* can be placed in two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Weak)*
2. *Less Emotional Need for Rules*



Finally, turning to NL 3 code, the general manager stated that:

1. “*to truly understand hotel guests’ expectations or needs, hotel management should benefit from the flat structure*”
2. “*with only four levels, this facilitates hands-on knowledge of what really happens with the hotel guests*”

Expressions such as *to truly understand hotel guests’ expectations, benefit from the flat structure, with four levels, facilitates hands-on knowledge* can be classified into one category of information service quality gap (Gap1) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. *Management Levels*

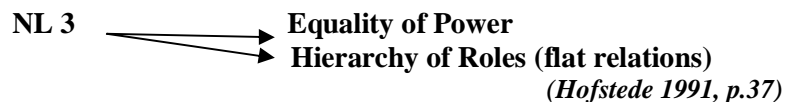


Also, in the NL 3 code, the general manager said:

1. “*I want to be equal to the service employees on the first floor*”
2. everyone working at NL hotel is the same and equal

Expressions such as *be equal to service employees at the first floor, everyone working at NL hotel on is the same and equal*, can be classified in two categories of small power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p.37), these two categories are:

1. *Equality of Power*
2. *Hierarchy of Roles (Flat Relations)*



**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)**

By examining both the power distance and the first service quality gap (Information Gap) codes using the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be determined between small power distance and the first service quality gap. This

relation can be explained by linking codes NL 14 and NL 15 on the one hand with NL 3 on the other inside prototype model cell (1, 1) as illustrated in Table 5.17.1

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL 3	
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 14, NL 15	<b>NL 14, NL 15</b> Equality of power Flat Relations.	<b>NL 3</b> Management levels.  Equality of power Flat Relations

Table 5.17. 1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 1)

### The Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

Turning to prototype model cell (column 1, row 2), the interaction involves codes for uncertainty avoidance and the information gap 1 (NL 16, NL 17, and NL 18; NL 1, NL 2 and NL 3) as illustrated in Table 5.18:

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL 1, NL 2, NL 3
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL17, NL 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,2)

Table 5.18 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

By inspecting these six codes one is hoping to explain how uncertainty avoidance can affect the first service quality gap and by which mechanisms. In doing so, we will start with code NL 16. According to this code, a hotel receptionist said:

1. “in an unexpected service situation, I already booked a room for a guest at another hotel, because the our hotel at this moment was already fully booked”
2. “hotel management emphasis on innovative service quality... in unexpected situations”

Expressions such as *in unexpected situation, I already booked a room, management emphasis on innovative service quality... in unexpected situations* can be placed in two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125), these two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (weak)**
2. **Innovative Idea and Behavior**

Here, the hotel staff members believe and consider uncertainty to be a normal feature and it is accepted as it comes. Further, there is a strong emotional need to control the environment and be innovative in ideas and behaviors shared by the NL hotel workers.



Also, according to the NL 16, the NL receptionist said that:

1. “from the first day working here”
2. “I know that the hotel management emphasizes”
3. “on innovative service quality as a main target and goal in general”
4. “similar to the hotel management”

5. *“I am committed in performing my job to the same general goal in general and to serving guest in particular”*

Expressions such as *from the first day working here, I know that the hotel management emphasis, on innovative service quality as a main target and goal in general, similar to the hotel management, I am committed in performing my job to the same general goal and to serving guest in particular* can be classified into two categories of the specifications gap and two categories of the performance gap 3 in the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73, p. 92-93), these categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Goal setting*
3. *Role conflict*
4. *Employee- Job Fit*

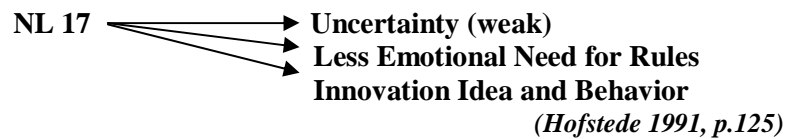


Within the NL 17 code, a cleaning lady said:

1. *“even in the absence of hotel rules and procedures”*
2. *“confronted by an unexpected problem or ambiguous service situation,”*
3. *“it is better to do something for the hotel guests rather than do nothing”*
4. *hotel employees put more innovative value on doing*
5. *“formally following the rules... with unexpected needs or requests”*

Expressions such as *even in the absence of hotel rules & procedures, confronted by an unexpected problem or ambiguous service situation, it is better to do something for the hotel guests rather than do nothing, innovative value, formally following the rules... with unexpected needs, or requests* can be placed into three categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these three categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Weak)*
2. *Less Emotional Need for Rules*
3. *Innovative Idea and Behavior*



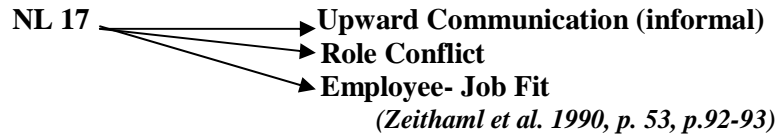
Also, according to the NL 17, the cleaner lady said:

1. *“If I see children’s stuff inside the hotel room, I put in extra towels than usual, as the guest may want more towels for the children and at the end of day I will tell my boss and also my colleagues to do the same the next day”*

Expressions such as *if I see children’s stuff inside the hotel room, I put in extra towels than usual, as the guest may want more towels for the children and in the end of day I will tell my boss my colleagues to do the same the next day* can be placed in one main category of the information service quality gap and two main categories of the performance service quality gap using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 53, p.92-93), these three categories are:

1. *Upward Communication (Informal)*
2. *Role Conflict*
3. *Employee- Job Fit*



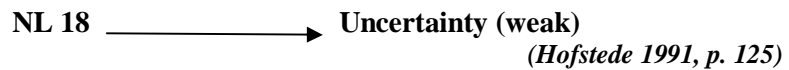


In the NL18 coded answers, the NL restaurant waiter said:

1. “I have been working for NL hotel for two years ago and I would accept a new opportunity to work for another hotel if that position added to my career”

Expressions such as *I have been working for NL hotel for two years ago and I would accept a new opportunity to work for another hotel if that position added to my career* can be classified into a single category of weak uncertainty avoidance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), this category is:

1. *Uncertainty (weak)*



The NL18 answer does not have links to the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990).

### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

By examining the uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be found between weak uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap. Here, this relation can be fully explained by linking code NL 17 on one hand with codes NL 1 and NL 2 on the other within prototype model cell (1, 2).

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1 NL 1, NL 2
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance NL 17	NL17 Uncertainty (weak) Less need for rules
	NL 1 , NL 2 Upward Communication.
	Upward Communication
	Uncertainty (weak) Less need for rules

Table 5.18.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 2)

### The Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

All the codes related to individualism/collectivism and the first service quality gap (i.e. NL 19, NL 20, NL 21, NL 1, NL 2, and NL 3), represent the prototype model cell number (1, 3) as illustrated in Table 5.19.

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1 NL 1, NL 2, NL 3
Individualism NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	Model Cell (1,3)

Table 5.19 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

Starting with NL 19 code, the NL human resources manager said that:

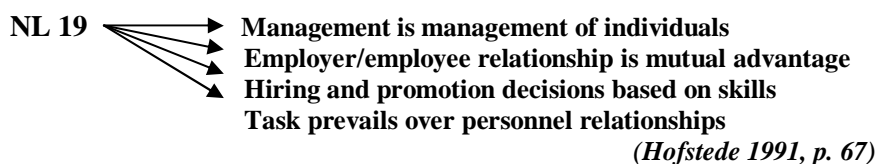
1. “I was appointed here in this hotel based on the match between my qualifications

- and the requirements of the job that I perform”
2. “hiring or even promoting an employee based on personnel relationships is nepotism and should not be openly admitted”

Expressions such as *I was appointed, based on the match between my qualifications, and the requirements of the job that I perform, hiring or even promoting, personnel relationships is nepotism and should not be openly admitted* can be identified with into four categories of the individualism dimension using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. **Management is management of individuals**
2. **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage**
3. **Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills**
4. **Task prevails over personnel relationships**

These four categories refer to the individualistic values among the NL hotel staff members. They also indicate that hotel staff members highly value their individual task-relationships with each other. Further, the staff believe and consider that individuals should be independent of the group and further that tasks prevail over personnel relationships.



Also, based on the NL 19 code, the expressions outlined above can be classified into two major categories of the performance service quality gap (Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. **Employee-Job Fit**
2. **Supervisory Control System**

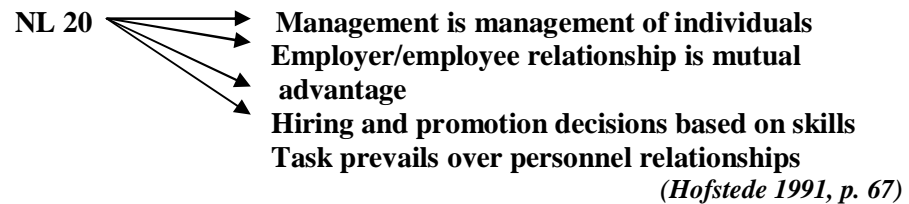


Moving on the NL 20 code, the cleaning lady said that:

1. “the performance is measured using every output”
2. “that is monitored and individuals rewarded based on the delivery of services”
3. “such as an employees’ service behavior with the hotel guest”
4. hotel management always ties compensation to those aspects of individual behavior
5. “service employees do not feel that individual performance goes unnoticed and unrewarded”
6. “hotel management recognizes everyone’s efforts”

Expressions such as *the performance is measured using every output, that is monitored and individuals rewarded based on the delivery of services, such as an employees’ service behavior with the hotel guest, hotel management always ties compensation to those aspects of individual behavior, service employees do not feel that individual performance goes unnoticed & unrewarded, hotel management recognizes everyone’s efforts* can be classified into four categories of the individualism dimension using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. **Management is management of individuals**
2. **Employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage**
3. **Hiring and promotion decisions based on skills**
4. **Task prevails over personnel relationships**



Also, in terms of the NL 20 code, the expressions stated above can be classified within two major categories of the performance service quality gap using the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*



Finally, turning to the NL 21 code, the NL restaurant waiter said:

1. “*service employees at this hotel are evaluated based on what they do rather than who they personally are*”
2. “*unless it can be demonstrated that personality is directly linked to service quality performance*”
3. “*performance evaluation is a process of looking for objective performance data*”
4. “*involves an open, honest dialogue between hotel management and hotel employees*”

Expressions such as *service employees at this hotel are evaluated based on what they do rather than who they personally are, unless it can be demonstrated that personality is directly linked to service quality performance, the performance evaluation is a process of looking for objective performance data (facts), involves an open, honest dialogue between hotel management and hotel employees* can be classified in four categories of the individualism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. *Management is management of individuals*
2. *Employer/employee relationships is mutual advantage*
3. *Hiring and promotion decisions based on skills*
4. *Task prevails over personnel relationships*

(Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

Also, using the NL 21 code, the concepts stated above can be classified into two main categories of the performance service quality gap (Gap 3) using the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*



### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)

The analysis of the individualism dimension and the first service quality gap codes using both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model reveals that it is not possible to empirically demonstrate a relation between the individualism dimension and the first service quality gap. In other words, individualism does empirically explain why guest information is informally gathered, reported and communicated along with a flat structure within the NL

hotel. Here, the individualism within the NL hotel cannot empirically provide direct explanations over the first service quality gap.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL 1, NL 2, NL 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.19.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 3)**

In an attempt to gain great insight into how individualism affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), there will be an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (1, 3) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

Combining all the codes on long-/short- term orientation and the first service quality gap (i.e. NL 22, NL 23, NL 24, NL 1, N L 2, and NL 3) represents the prototype model cell (1, 4) as illustrated in Table 5.20.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL 1, NL 2, NL 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,4)

**Table 5.20 The Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

Considering the NL 22 code, a senior receptionist said that:

1. *for me, working at the NL hotel is a great opportunity in terms of two main aspects: first getting my final education component finished as I do my final research report here and second acquiring a training opportunity as a receptionist to add to my career and future prospective”.*

Expressions such as *for me, working at the NL hotel is a great opportunity in terms of two main aspects: first getting my final education component finished as I do my final research report here and second acquiring training opportunity as receptionist to add to my career and future prospective* can be placed within a single category of the long-term orientation dimension of Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

**1. Long-term Results**

This category reflects the long-term orientation found among NL hotel staff members. It also represents the long-term goals or needs that NL members want to achieve as an indicator of their future orientation. In terms of this category, the NL hotel’s staff members tend to be concerned with respecting the demands of virtue.



The NL 22 code does not have any empirical link to the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Also, according to the NL 23 code, the marketing and sales manager said that:

1. *“I have worked at this hotel for many years and every year is considered as a new opportunity for career development to me”*

2. “if the NL management lets me develop my career over the coming years I will be interested to stay and work here in the future”

Expressions such as *I have worked at this hotel for many years and every year is considered as a new opportunity for career development to me, if NL management lets me to develop my career over the coming years, I will be interest to stay and work here in the future* can be placed in the category of long-term results. As with the NL 22 code, this category reflects the long-term orientation among the hotel staff members.

NL 23 → Long-term Results  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

Also, as part of the NL 23 code, the marketing and sales manager said:

1. “building a long-term relationship within this hotel can be also empirically seen from marketing research”
2. “as a marketing & seals manager, I can say that: the NL hotel management always interests in building such long-term relationship with the guests through conducting a continuous research for their expectations and needs”

Expressions such as *building a long-term relation within this hotel can be also empirically seen from marketing research. as a marketing & seals manager, I can say that: the NL hotel management always interests in building such long-term relationship with the guests through conducting a continuous research for their expectations and needs* can be classified into a single category of the service quality gap (information gap) using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

#### 1. Marketing Research

NL 23 → Marketing Research  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

Finally, turning to the NL 24 code, a cleaning lady said that:

1. “I consider myself as a hotel guest, when I am satisfied and have a good relationship with the hotel , I will stay- I means work- at the NL hotel”

Expressions such as *I consider myself as a hotel guest, when I am satisfied and have good relationship with the hotel, will stay -I mean work- at the NL hotel* can also placed in the long-term results category. Here, the NL hotel’s staff members tend to be present- and future-oriented rather than past-oriented in their achievements. And again the NL hotel staff members are concerning with possessing the virtue.

NL 24 → Long-term Results  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

The NL 24 code does not have any empirical link to the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)

By examining codes of the long-term orientation and the first service quality gap (information gap) using both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation seems to be uncovered between long-term orientation and service quality information gap. Here, this relation can be explained by linking code NL 23 on the one hand with NL 1 on the other in the prototype model cell (1, 4) as illustrated in Table 5. 20.1.

<b>Service Quality</b> National Culture	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NL 1						
<b>Long- term Orientation</b> NL 23	<table style="border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none;">NL 23 Long- term Results</td> <td style="border: none;">⋮</td> <td style="border: none;">NL 1 Marketing Research</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">Marketing Research</td> <td style="border: none;">⋮</td> <td style="border: none;">Long-term Results</td> </tr> </table>	NL 23 Long- term Results	⋮	NL 1 Marketing Research	Marketing Research	⋮	Long-term Results
NL 23 Long- term Results	⋮	NL 1 Marketing Research					
Marketing Research	⋮	Long-term Results					

**Table 5.20.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (1, 4)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

Taking into account all the codes of small power distance and second service quality gap (i.e. NL 13, NL 14, NL 15, NL 4, NL 5, and NL 6), allows us to represent the prototype model cell (2, 1) as illustrated in Table 5.21.

<b>Service Quality</b> National Culture	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13, NL 14, NL 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (2, 1)

**Table 5.21 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

Starting with NL 4 code, the general manager said that:

1. *“service quality standards are open to novelty and thinking big”*
2. *“anything a guest wants is feasible with our flexible & pioneering standards”*
3. *see guests’ demands as challenges not problems and innovative solutions are one way to achieve guests satisfaction*
4. *“technological standardization frees service employees from handling routine tasks and transactions”*
5. *“so, frontline service employees can then spend more time on personal encounters with the hotel guests”*

Expressions such as *service quality standards are open to novelty and thinking big, anything a guests wants is certainly feasible with our flexible and pioneering standards, technological standardization frees service employees from handling routine tasks and transactions, so, frontline service employees can then spend more time on personal encounters with the hotel guests* can be placed within three categories of the second service quality gap using the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Standardization**
3. **Goal Setting**

At the NL hotel, the management’s commitment is to extend goals such as guest satisfaction and loyalty. Further, service quality standardization emphasizes guest satisfaction and service quality goal setting is strategic towards guest satisfaction.



The NL 4 code does not have any comments related to the Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

Turning to the NL 5 code, the general manager said that:

1. all hotel staff members commit to the service quality strategies, standards or specifications
2. *“by setting service standards and putting our money where our guests are, the senior management executives are doing more than simply talking profit and cost”*
3. *“our strategic mission is guaranteeing our service quality for our guests’ satisfaction”*
4. *“by targeting out service quality strategies, policies and then resources to hotel guests satisfaction, the other internal and organizational goals such as profits and cost reduction will be achieved”*

Expressions such as **all hotel staff members incrementally commit to the service quality strategies, standards or specifications, by setting service standards and putting our money where our guests are, the senior management executives are doing more than simply talking profit & cost, our strategic mission is guaranteeing our service quality for our guests’ satisfaction, targeting out service quality strategies, policies and then resources to hotel guests satisfaction, the other internal and organizational goals such as profits and cost reduction will be achieved** can be placed in three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Standardization**
3. **Goal Setting**



*(Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73)*

As with the NL 4 code, the NL 5 code does not link to Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

Considering code NL 6, the front office manager said that:

1. *“the first service quality strategic goal is attaining guests’ satisfaction in an innovative manner”*
2. *“the hotel management believes that commitment to service quality as strategic goal is achieved through the guests’ satisfaction”*
3. as the NL hotel is a market-driven organization, commitment to the hotel guest is apparent in everything that done within the hotel
4. *“the service quality strategies, standards, and specifications are built on the fact that ... a hotel guest is not dependent on us... we are dependent on the guest ... our guests are individuals, groups or what ever who bring us their wants and needs in such competitive challenging business”*

Expressions such as **the first service quality strategic goal is attaining guests’ satisfaction in an innovative manner, the hotel management believes that commitment to service quality as strategic goal is achieved through the guests’ satisfaction, the service quality strategies, standards, and specifications are built on the fact that ... a hotel guest is not dependent on us... we are dependent on the guest ... our guest are individuals, groups or what ever who bring us their wants and needs in such competitive challenging business** can be placed within three categories of the second service quality gap using the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Standardization**

3. Goal Setting

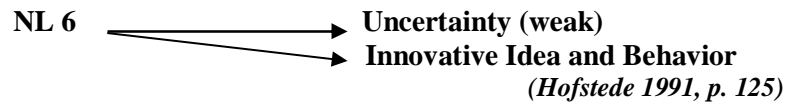


Also from the NL 6 code, the front office manager said:

1. “the main goal at NL hotel in general and at front office department is to satisfy guests and if they are not, we are certain and confident that they will be satisfied next time they stay with us because our hotel is innovative one comparing with others”

Expressions such as *the main goal at NL hotel in general and at front office department is to satisfy guests and if they are not, we are certain and confident that they will be satisfied next time they stay with us because our hotel is innovative one comparing with others* can be located within two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Weak)*
2. *Innovative Idea and Behavior*



**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

The examination of the small power distance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes reveals that it is not possible to conceptualize a relation between small power distance and second service quality gap. In other words, the power distance dimension cannot empirically explain why the NL hotel management’s commitment to service quality is based on hotel guest satisfaction. Here, the small power distance within the hotel does not empirically provide explanations for the second service quality gap.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13, NL 14, NL 15		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.21.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 1)**

In order to gain great insight into possible explanations of how small power distance affects the second service quality gap, there will be a focus on this crosscutting cell (2, 1) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**

For the prototype model cell (column 2, row 2), the analysis involves the codes for uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap (i.e. NL 16, NL 17, NL 18, NL 4, NL 5, and NL 6) as illustrated in Table 5.22:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL 17, NL 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (2, 2)

**Table 5.22 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**



The analysis of these six codes aims to explain how uncertainty avoidance can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. Codes NL 16, NL 17 and NL 18 were assessed on in pages 127-129 and codes NL 4, NL 5 and NL 6 on pages 134-136.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)**

By examining the uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap codes using both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, a relation may be uncovered between weak uncertainty avoidance and service quality specifications gap. Here, this relation can be explained by linking code NL16 with NL 6 code in the prototype model cell (2, 2) as illustrated in Table 5. 22.1.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Specifications Gap 2 NL 6	
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance NL16	NL 16 Uncertainty (weak) Innovative idea and behavior  Management Commitment Goal Setting	NL 6 Management Commitment Goal Setting  Uncertainty (weak) Innovative idea and behavior

Table 5.22.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 2)

**The Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

For the prototype model cell (column 2, row 3), the examination involves the codes for the individualism dimension and second service quality gap (i.e. NL 19, NL 20, NL 21, NL 4, NL 5, and NL 6) as illustrated in Table 5.23:

National Culture \ Service Quality	Specifications Gap 2 NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
Individualism NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	Model Cell (2,3)

Table 5.23 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)

The analysis of these six codes aims to explain how individualism can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and through which mechanisms. Codes NL 19, NL 20 and NL 21 were assessed on pages 129-131 and codes NL 4, NL 5, NL 6 on pages 134-136.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of the individualism and second the service quality gap codes reveals that it is not possible to discern a relation between the individualism and the second service quality gap. The individualism codes (NL 19, NL 20, and NL 21) are classified into four categories (management is management of individuals, employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions based on skills, and task prevails over relationships) that cannot explain the second service quality gap. In other words, the individualism dimension does not directly explain why NL hotel management’s commitment to service quality is based on guest satisfaction. In this case, the individualism within the NL hotel cannot empirically provide possible explanations for the second service quality gap.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL5, NL 6
<b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.23.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

In an attempt to gain greater empirical insight into how and why individualism affects the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2), This crosscutting cell (2, 3) is investigated furthering the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

- **The Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

For the prototype model cell (column 2, row 4), the examination involves the codes for long-term orientation and the second service quality gap (i.e. NL 22, NL 23, NL 24, NL 4, NL 5, and NL 6) as illustrated in Table 5.24:

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (2,4)

**Table 5.24 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

By examining these six codes, we hope to explain how long-term orientation can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. Codes NL 22, NL 23 and NL 24 were reviewed on pages 132-133 and codes NL 4, NL 5 and NL 6 on pages 134-136.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

The analysis of the long-term orientation and the second service quality gap codes reveals that it is not possible to conceptualize a relation between long-term orientation and specifications gap. The long-term orientation codes (NL 22, NL 23, and NL 24) are put in a single category labeled as long-term results, which cannot explain the specifications service quality gap. That is, the long-term orientation dimension within the NL hotel case study cannot empirically provide explanations for the second service quality gap.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NL 4, NL 5, NL 6
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

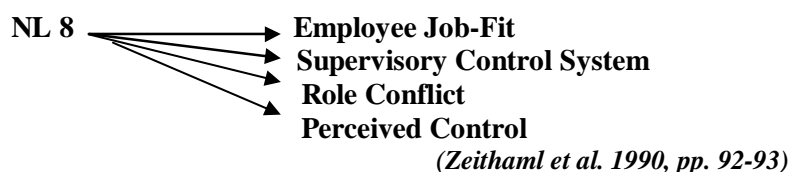
**Table 5.24.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

- **The Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)**

Turning to the prototype model cell (column 3, row 1), the analysis involves the codes for power distance and the third service quality gap (i.e. NL 13, NL 14, NL 15, NL 7, NL 8, and NL 9) as illustrated in Table 5.25:



These service quality performance categories reflect the limited role of conflict in the NL hotel. They also reflect that the selection of hotel staff members based on task and job descriptions. Further, decentralization and empowerment are used in order to serve and satisfy hotel guests.

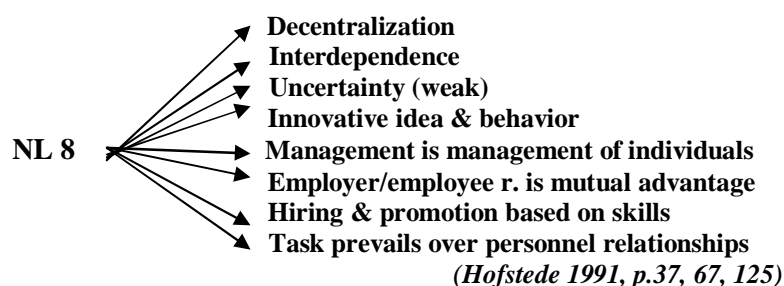


Also according to the NL 8, the NL receptionist said that:

1. *“at this hotel, the hotel management always hires qualified employees”*
2. *“then gives them training programmes that they ask for”*
3. *“nevertheless, hotel rules should also be respected”*
4. *“serving and satisfying hotel guests are individual challenges”*
5. *“that certainly need a new role in every new encounter with guests”*
6. *“greater self-rule or independence”*

Expressions such as *at this hotel, the hotel management always hires qualified employees, nevertheless hotel rules should also be respected, then gives them training programmes that they ask for, serving and satisfying hotel guests are an individual challenges, that certainly need a new role in every new encounter with guests, greater self-rule or independence* can be identified with categories of the small power distance, weak uncertainty and individualism dimensions of Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37, p. 67, p.125), these nine categories are:

1. **Decentralization**
2. **Interdependence**
3. **Uncertainty (weak)**
4. **Innovative idea and Behavior**
5. **Less Need for Rules**
6. **Management is management of individuals**
7. **Employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage**
8. **Hiring & promotion decisions based on skills**
9. **Task prevails over personnel relationships**

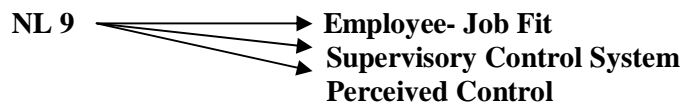


Turning to the NL 9 code, a cleaning lady said that:

1. *“the hotel management provides me and everyone working here with self-development opportunities”*
2. *“such as English language courses to help service employees to improve their ability and willingness to serve hotel guests”*
3. *frontline service employees who have a chance to grow in their jobs are more likely to understand what they should do for hotel guests*
4. *“in many cases, I can solve many room cleaning problems for guests without any discussion with my direct boss”*
5. *“the hotel management takes my individual performance into account when I am financially rewarded”*

Expressions such as *the hotel management provides me and everyone working here with self-development opportunities, such as English language courses to help service employees to improve their ability and willingness to serve hotel guests, frontline service employees who have a chance to grow in their jobs are more likely to understand what they should do for hotel guests, in many cases, I can solve many room cleaning problems for guests without any discussion with my direct boss, the hotel management takes my individual performance into account when I am financially rewarded* can be classified in three categories of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990 pp. 92-93). These categories are:

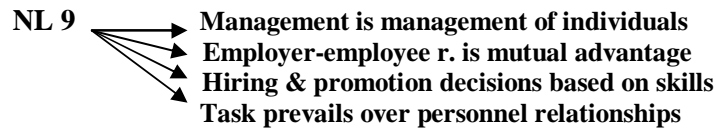
1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*
3. *Perceived Control*



(Zeithaml et al. 1990, pp. 92-93)

Also, using NL 9 code, the above expressions can be classified in four categories of the individualism dimension of Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these categories are:

1. *Management is management of individuals*
2. *Employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage*
3. *Hiring & promotion decisions based on skills*
4. *Task prevails over personnel relationships*



(Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

### Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)

By examining the power distance and the third service quality gap codes using both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, a relation seems to be thought between small power distance and the performance gap. Here, this relation can be explained by linking code NL 13 with NL 7, and NL 8 within the prototype model cell (3, 1) as illustrated in Table 5.25.1.

National Culture	Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NL 7, NL 8	
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13	NL 13 Decentralization Interdependence  Perceived Control	NL 7, NL 8 Perceived Control  Decentralization Interdependence	

Table 5.25.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 1)

### The Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)

Turning to prototype model cell (column 3, row 2), the analysis involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and performance gap (i.e. NL 16, NL 17, NL 18, NL 7, NL 8, and NL 9) as illustrated in the Table 5.26:

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> NL 7, NL 8, NL 9
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL 17, NL 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 2)

**Table 5.26 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

The examination of these six codes could explain how uncertainty avoidance can affect the third service quality gap and by which mechanisms. Codes NL 16, NL 17 and NL 18 were examined on pages 127-129 and codes NL 7, NL 8 and NL 9 on pages 139-141.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

By examining the uncertainty avoidance and the third gap codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation can be found between weak uncertainty avoidance and the performance gap. Here, linking code NL16 and NL 17 with NL 8 can explain this relation within the prototype model cell (3, 2).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> NL 8	
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL 17	NL 16, NL 17 Uncertainty (weak) Less Need for Rules Innovative Idea & Behavior	NL 8 Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit
	Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	Uncertainty (weak) Less Need for Rules Innovative idea & Behavior

**Table 5.26.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

Considering all the codes related to individualism and the third service quality gap (i.e. NL 19, NL 20, NL 21, NL 7, NL 8, and NL 9) allows us to assess the prototype model cell number (3, 3) as illustrated in Table 5.27.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> NL 7, NL 8, NL 9
<b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 3)

**Table 5.27 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

The examination of these six codes could explain how individualism dimension can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. Code NL 19, NL 20 and NL 21 were reviewed on pages 129-131 and codes NL 7, NL 8 and NL 9 on pages 139-141.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

By examining the individualism and the performance service quality gap codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, a relation may be found between

individualism and service quality performance gap. This relation can be explained by linking codes NL 19, NL 20, and NL 21 on the one hand with codes NL 8 and NL 9 on the other within the prototype model cell (3, 3) as illustrated in Table 5. 27.1.

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NL 8, NL 9	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21</p>	<p><b>NL 19, NL 20, NL 21</b> Management is management of individuals Employer-employee relation is mutual advantage Hiring &amp; Promotion decisions are based on skills Task prevails personnel relations</p>	<p><b>NL 8, NL 9</b> Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted black;"/> <p>Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System</p> <p>Management is management of individuals Employer-employee relation is mutual advantage Hiring &amp; Promotion decisions are based on skills Task prevails personnel relations</p>

**Table 5.27.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of long- term orientation and the third service quality (Performance Gap 3), the examination of these six codes (NL 22, NL 23, NL 24, NL 7, NL 8 and NL 9) represents the prototype model cell number (3, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (5.28).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NL 7, NL 8, NL 9
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Model Cell</b> (3,4)</p>

**Table 5.28 The Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how long-term orientation dimension can affect the performance gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes NL 22, NL 23 and NL 24 in pages 132-133 and followed by codes NL 7, NL 8 and finally NL 9 in pages 139-141.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

The analysis of the long-term orientation and the third service quality gap codes fails to reveal an empirical relation between long-term orientation and the performance service quality gap. The long-term orientation codes (NL 22, NL 23, and NL 24) were all placed within one category labeled long-term results, and this cannot explain the performance service quality gap. In other words, long-term results dimension fails to empirically explain why the hotel staff member’s performance is dominated by task and individual performance criteria. The long-term orientation within the NL hotel does not empirically explain the third service quality gap.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> NL 7, NL 8, NL 9
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.28.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

In an attempt to gain greater empirical insight into the possible explanations for how long-term orientation affects the performance service quality gap, there is an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (3,4) will be a focus during the subsequent empirical investigation of the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

Analysing all the six codes related to small power distance and the fourth service quality gap (i.e. NL 13, NL 14, NL 15, NL 10, NL 11, and NL 12) links to the prototype model cell (column 4, row 1) as illustrated in the Table 5.29.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13, NL 14, NL 15		<b>Model Cell</b> (4, 1)

**Table 5.29 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how small power distance can affect the last service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with NL 10 code.

According to this code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. *“making hotel guests aware of all hotel services could improve guests’ service quality perceptions and satisfaction”*
2. *“hotel management teaches hotel guests how to use the hotel services well”*
3. *“the hotel management places a large screen in the grand Café showing kitchen chefs doing their works”*
4. *“hotel advertising that illustrates actual employees in different departments doing their jobs can be very effective in communicating service quality excellence to our hotel guests”*

Expressions such as *making hotel guests aware of hotel services could improve guests’ service quality perceptions and satisfaction, hotel management teaches hotel guests how to use the hotel services well, the hotel management places a large screen in the grand Café showing kitchen chefs doing their works, hotel advertising that illustrates actual employees in different departments doing their jobs can be very effective in communicating service quality excellence to our hotel guests* can all be placed within one category of the communications gap using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117), this category is:

1. ***Horizontal communication (Extensive)***

This category reflects the extensive horizontal communications across the hotel’s functions and departments. It also refers to the internal and external marketing found within the NL hotel case study.





The NL 10 code, however does not have any empirical links with based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

Turning to the NL 11 code, the cleaner said:

1. "every morning before starting cleaning we get notes from other departments such as reception desk informing us about any change concerning our cleaning work"
2. "for instance, if the hotel guests in room 44 do not want their room cleaning at 9:00 am have already told at the reception desk, we will be also informed so we will not knock the door and disturb them at 9:00 am but go back later"

Expressions such as *every morning before starting cleaning we get notes from other departments such as reception desk informing us about any change concerning our cleaning work, for instance, if hotel guests in room 44 do not want their room cleaning at 9:00 am and have already told at the reception desk, we will be also informed so we will not knock the door disturb them at 9:00 am but go back later* can be placed within one category of the service quality communications gap using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117), this category is called as:

1. **Horizontal Communication (Extensive)**

As with the NL 10 code, this category refers to the extensive horizontal communications across the hotel's departments.

NL 11 → **Horizontal Communications**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

The NL 11 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede's Culture Model (Hofstede 1991).

According to NL 12 code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. "on the one hand, pricing too low can lead to inaccurate inferences about the quality of the hotel service"
2. "on the other hand, pricing too high can set high guests expectations that may be difficult to match in service delivery"
3. "in order to avoid such pricing traps, marketing & sales department extensively and continually contacts other departments such as food & beverage or housekeeping"

Expressions such as *pricing too low can lead to inaccurate inferences about the quality of the hotel service, On the other hand, pricing too high can set high guests expectations that may be difficult to match in service delivery, in order to avoid such pricing traps, marketing & sales department extensively and continually contacts other departments such as food & beverage or housekeeping* can be classified into one category of the service quality communications gap using the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117), this category is called as:

1. **Horizontal communication (Extensive)**

NL 12 → **Horizontal Communication**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

Again, the NL 12 code does not show any empirical links to Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

### **Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

The analysis of the small power distance and the fourth service quality gap codes fails to reveal a relation between small power distance and the communications gap. The small power distance codes (NL 13, NL 14, and NL 15) are classified into three categories (equality of

power, hierarchy of roles, interdependence and decentralization) that cannot explain the communications service quality gap. In other words, the power distance dimension cannot directly explain why NL hotel communications are extensive across the hotel’s functions and departments. Here, the small power distance within the hotel does not empirically provide interpretations for the communication service quality gap.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NL 13, NL 14, NL 15	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.29.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 1)**

Given this failure, there will be an emphasis on this crosscutting cell (4, 1) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

For prototype model cell (column 4, row 2), the analysis involves the codes for uncertainty avoidance and for the service communications gap (i.e. NL 16, NL 17, NL 18, NL 10, NL 11, and NL 12) as illustrated in Table 5.30:

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL 17, NL18	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,2)

**Table 5.30 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of these six codes could explain how uncertainty avoidance can affect the fourth service quality gap and through which mechanisms. Codes NL 16, NL17 and NL 18 were analysed on pages 129-131 and codes NL 10, NL 11 and NL 12 on pages 144-145.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of the uncertainty avoidance and the fourth service quality codes reveals that a lack of an empirical relation between weak uncertainty avoidance and communications gap.

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NL 16, NL 17, NL 18	<b>No Crosscut Examples</b>

**Table 5.30.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

As in previous similar situations, there will be a focus on this crosscutting cell (4, 2) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

For the prototype model cell (column 4, row 3), the examination involves the codes of the individualism dimension and the fourth service quality gap (i.e. NL 19, NL 20, NL 21, NL 10, NL 11, and NL 12) as illustrated in Table 5.31:

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21		<b>Model Cell</b> (4,3)

**Table 5.31 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

By analyzing these six codes one might be able to explain how individualism can affect the communications gap in service quality and by which mechanisms. Codes NL 19, NL 20 and NL 21 were examined on pages 129-131 and codes NL 10, NL 11 and NL 12 on pages 144-145.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of the individualism and the fourth service quality gap codes fails to reveal an empirical relation between individualism and communications service quality gap. The individualism codes (NL 19, NL 20, and NL 21) are classified into four categories (management is management of individuals, employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage, hiring and promotion decisions are based on skills, and task prevails over personnel relationships) that are not able to explain the fourth service quality gap. In other words, individualism dimension does not directly explain why NL hotel’s communications among hotel departments and functions are extensive. Here, the individualism within the hotel cannot empirically provide explanations for the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Individualism</b> NL 19, NL 20, NL 21		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.31.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 3)**

As in previous similar situations, there will be a focus on this crosscutting cell (4, 2) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

Taking into account all the codes of long-term orientation and the fourth service quality gap (i.e. NL 22, NL 23, NL 24, NL 10, NL 11, and NL 12) allows to consider the last prototype model cell (4, 4) as illustrated in Table 5.32.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24		<b>Model Cell</b> (4,4)

**Table 5.32 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

The analysis of these six codes could explain how long-term orientation dimension can affect the communication gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. Codes NL 22, NL 23 and NL 24 were analysed on pages 132-133 and codes NL 10, NL 11 and NL 12 on pages 144-145.

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of the long-term orientation and the fourth service quality gap codes reveals a lack of an empirical relation between long-term orientation and communications service quality gap. The long-term orientation codes (NL 22, NL 23, and NL 24) are classified into one category, (long-term results) which cannot empirically explain the communications service quality gap. In other words, the long-term orientation dimension does not empirically explain why NL hotel departments extensively communicate and in internal and external matters. Here, the long-term orientation dimension cannot empirically explain this gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NL 22, NL 23, NL 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>	

**Table 5.32.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

As in previous similar situations, there will be a focus on this crosscutting cell (4, 2) during the second Dutch hotel case study (NED).

In Figure 5. 5, all the national culture – service quality relations within the NL hotel case study are summarized.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b>		<b>Specifications Gap 2</b>		<b>Performance Gap 3</b>		<b>Communication Gap 4</b>
<b>National Culture</b>	NL 1, NL 2, NL 3		NL 4, NL 5, NL 6		NL 7, NL 8, NL 9		NL 10, NL 11, NL 12
<b>Small Power Distance</b>  NL 13, NL 14, NL15	NL 14, NL 15 Equality of Power Flat Relations  Management levels	NL 3 Management levels  Equality of power Flat Relations	?		NL 13 Decentralization Interdependence  Perceived Control	NL 7, NL 8 Perceived Control  Decentralization Interdependence	?
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b>  NL 16, NL 17, NL 18	NL 17 Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules  Upward Communications	NL 1, NL 2 Upward Communication  Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules	NL 16 Uncertainty weak Innovative Idea & Behavior  Management Commitment Goal Setting	NL 6 Management Commitment Goal Setting  Uncertainty Innovative Idea & Behavior	NL 16, NL 17 Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	NL 8 Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules	?
<b>Individualism</b>  NL 19, NL 20, NL 21	?		?		NL19, 20, 21 Relation is Mutual Hiring&Promotion Management of Individuals Task over Relation  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system	NL 8, NL 9 Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system  Relation is Mutual Hiring& Promotion Management of Individuals Task over Relation	?
<b>Long-term Orientation</b>  NL 22, NL 23, NL 24	NL 23 Long-term Results  Marketing Research	NL 1 Marketing Research  Long-term Results	?		?		?

**Figure 5. 5The First Dutch Hotel (NL) Case Study Summary**

### 5.5.5 Finding and Conceptualizing the Mechanisms within the NL Case

In this section, the task is to partially complete the NL prototype model (M0) schema with the mechanisms found and by which the various national culture dimensions affect the service quality gaps. This is possible because the twenty-four examples from the NL hotel case study have been coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture in the previous section. As just summarized in Figure 5.5, there are only seven model cells for which mechanisms have been found. These are discussed below:

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (1, 1): Small power distance/Information Gap**

The placement of codes NL 14, NL 15 and NL 3 in this cell indicates that a mechanism has been found; this can be conceptualized as “*Functional-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing*”. This mechanism describes how the NL hotel staff members functionally gather and share guest information in order to close/eliminate the first service quality gap. Since the guests' information is considered as a functional instrument, rather than a form of power, the NL hotel's top managers are willing to share and exchange this information with their subordinates who have a need of it. The small power distance that exists among the hotel staff members encourages flat relationships between senior and junior hotel staff. Further, the flat structure facilitates information gathering and sharing based on functional objectives. For instance, it is accepted by the NL hotel's senior managers and also frontline service employees that they can discuss and exchange guests information with anyone (higher or lower) in the hierarchy in order to understand what their guests expect, want, need and have asked for.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (1, 2): Weak uncertainty avoidance/Information Gap**

The placement of codes NL 17, NL 1 and NL 2 in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which has been conceptualized as “*Open and informal-Driven Communication*”. This mechanism describes how the NL hotel staff members communicate guest information using much more open and informal behaviors and routines in order to close/eliminate the first service quality gap. Their weak uncertainty avoidance enables the hotel staff members to pay little attention to formal behaviors, procedures and even formal hotel rules when communicating hotel guest information. Within the NL case, the hotel staff members (managers and service employees) communicate using open and formal behaviors or patterns. Thus, the NL hotel has few formal rules that need to be followed when communicating and exchanging information concerning hotel guests' expectations and needs. Finally, as stated by the NL hotel general manager, such informal communication behaviors and routines are considered as one of the best practical ways to deal with guests expectations since these always be predicted and known through this informality and the direct interaction with both guests and frontline service employees.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (1, 4): Long-term Orientation/ Information Gap**

Having codes NL 23 and NL 1 placed in this cell indicates a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Guest Relationship-Driven Information Gathering*”. This mechanism describes how the NL hotel staff members build long-term relationships with hotel guests in order to close/eliminate the first service quality gap. The long-term orientation found among NL hotel 's staff members leads them to focus on building and maintaining long-term relationships with hotel guests. Within the NL hotel, the long-term benefits and results can be seen in terms of viewing hotel guests as assets that need to be nurtured and retained. As

illustrated by the marketing & sales manager, the hotel's marketing research always focuses on attracting, retaining, and enhancing hotel guest relationships. The hotel has a huge guest database, reflecting that over time, the guest- relationship driven behaviors and practices achieve a higher level of knowledge and information on guests' expectations and needs. The NL hotel guest database is well designed: it shows who the current guests are (names, addresses, phone numbers and so on), what their main preferences are, the related cost of serving them and relevant segmentation information.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (2, 2): Weak uncertainty avoidance/ Specifications Gap**

The placement of codes NL 16 and NL 6 in this cell indicates that a mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality*”. This mechanism describes how the NL hotel's senior managers externally focus on hotel guests in setting service quality specifications and standards. For NL hotel's top management, guest-satisfaction-driven specifications are the optimal behaviors and practical ways to close/eliminate the second service quality gap. Their weak degree of uncertainty avoidance steers the hotel top managers to focus on external hotel objectives, in terms of guest satisfaction, simply because it can be achieved, measured and maintained. To close/eliminate the second service quality gap within the hotel, the service quality specifications set by senior management are based on hotel guest expectations and requirements. In other words, setting flexible specifications and then being committed to them is the way to achieve guest satisfaction. Further, the NL hotel's managers leave the door open for frontline service employees to innovatively perform within these flexible standards and specifications during their encounters with hotel guests. That is, satisfying the hotel guests during service encounters is the building block and component used to establish service standards and specifications in this hotel.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (3, 1): Small power distance/Performance Gap**

Having of codes NL 13, NL 7 and NL 8 in this cell implies a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality*”. The main empowering behaviors are to enable frontline service employees to firstly control what they perform and, secondly to make decisions concerning what is good and necessary in order to satisfy hotel guests. The small power distance among the hotel's particular reflects the empowered positions of the frontline service employees in their interactions with the hotel guests. Here, power and hierarchical behaviors and practices are played down and as a result there is strong empirical evidence of empowered behaviors by frontline service employees. Empowerment in the NL hotel case means pushing the decision-making power down to the lowest levels of the hotel. It means giving frontline service employees the authority to make significant decisions concerning serving NL hotel guests.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (3, 2): Weak uncertainty avoidance/ Performance Gap**

Having codes NL 16 NL 17 and NL 8 placed in this cell indicates a critical mechanism which can be conceptualized as “*Guest Satisfaction-Driven Performing*”. This mechanism describes how the hotel's frontline service employees perform and behave towards the hotel guest expectations and needs. While the hotel's frontline service employees believe that the formal rules and system should be respected, the hotel guests' expectations and needs represent the main performance criteria in closing/eliminating the performance service quality gap. The weak uncertainty avoidance and the low emotional need for rules encourage the hotel staff members to behave and perform in ways that meet guests' expectations and needs. In doing so, the frontline staff take on the challenge of serving hotel guests in both familiar

and unfamiliar situations. On many occasions, the frontline service employees' behaviors reflect innovation in meeting hotel guests' requests. In addition, one of the main performing criteria used by the hotel management is the extent to which frontline service employees satisfy hotel guests.

- **Mechanism for Model Cell (3, 3): Individualism/Performance Gap**

Having codes NL 19, NL 20, NL 21, NL 8, and NL 9 placed in this cell implies a critical mechanism, which can be conceptualized as “*Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task*”. This mechanism describes how the NL hotel staff members rely on task and individual outcome in performing towards closing/eliminate the third service quality gap. This mechanism is also related to human resource management's behaviors and practices: selection, performance appraisal and evaluation and reward criteria. The frontline service employees' individual performances are the dominant performing criteria in the NL hotel simply because of the existence of individualism values among NL hotel staff members.

In Figure 5. 6, the mechanisms found within the NL hotel case study are summarized.

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
Small Power Distance	Functional- Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	?	Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality	?
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Open and Informal Driven Communication	Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality	Guest-Satisfaction Driven Performing	?
Individualism	?	?	Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task	?
Long-term Orientation	Guest Relationship Driven Information Gathering	?	?	?

Figure 5.6 The Mechanisms within the NL Hotel Case Study

### 5.6 Comparing the EG and NL Hotel Case Studies: An Improved Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations

After examining the first two case studies (EG and NL hotels), the task is now to compare these in order to uncover similar and differing mechanisms that can be used in developing an improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations. The comparison between the EG case study and NL case study gives the prototype model (M0) an add value by filling in some of the empty model cells with mechanisms by which the various national culture dimensions affect the service quality gaps. The comparison also provides critical empirical evidence to build an improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations (see Figure 5.7).



Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap3	Communication Gap 4
<b>Power Distance:</b> Large  Small	Hierarchical Driven Information Gathering and Sharing  Functional Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	?	Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control  Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality	?
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b> Strong  Weak	Close and Formal Driven Communication  Open and Informal Driven Communication	Money-Specifying Driven Service Quality  Guest Satisfaction - Driven Specifying Service Quality	System Border Driven Performing  Guest-Satisfaction Driven Performing	Close and Formal Driven Communication
<b>Individualism/Collectivism:</b> Collectivism  Individualism	?	?	Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships  Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task	?
<b>Long- /Short- term Orientation</b> Short-term  Long-term	Guest Relationship Driven Information Gathering	Money-Specifying Driven Service Quality	?	?

Figure 5.7 An Improved Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations

The mechanisms presented in the improved model (M1) were empirically found in either the EG hotel or the NL hotel studies (see Figures 5.4 and 5.6). The conclusions arising from the EG and NL comparison indicate that there are thirteen mechanisms that can describe how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. What is empirically understood from the uncovered mechanisms is that national culture has direct effects on both managers and employees' behaviors exerted towards closing/eliminating the various service quality gaps. Below the thirteen mechanisms that are included in the improved model (M1) are summarized.

### 1. Power distance and Service Quality

The effects of power distance on service quality can be explained by four mechanisms:

**1.1 Hierarchical Driven Information Gathering and Sharing:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of large power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap).

**1.2 Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of large power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap).

**1.3 Functional Driven Information Gathering and Sharing:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of small power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap).

**1.4 Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of small power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap).

## 2. Uncertainty Avoidance and Service Quality

The effects of uncertainty avoidance on service quality can be explained by six mechanisms:

**2.1 Close and Formal Driven Communication:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the first and fourth service quality gaps (Information Gap and Communications Gap ).

**2.2 Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap).

**2.3 System Border-Driven Performing:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap).

**2.4 Open and Informal Driven Communication:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap).

**2.5 Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap).

**2.6 Guest Satisfaction-Driven Performing:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gaps (Performance Gap).

## 3. Individualism/Collectivism and Service Quality

The effects of individualism/collectivism on service quality can be explained by two mechanisms:

**3.1 Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of collectivism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap).

**3.2 Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of individualism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap).

## 4. Long-/Short- Term Orientation and Service Quality

The effects of long-short- term orientation on service quality can be explained by two mechanisms:

**4.1 Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of short-term orientation on the second service quality gap (Specification Gap).

**4.2 Guest Relationship-Driven Information Gathering:** this mechanism summarizes the effects of long-term orientation on the first service quality gap (Information Gap).

The main question raised at this point is whether the founded mechanisms in the improved model (M1) always exist between the national dimensions and the service quality gaps. In other words, would these model-mechanisms be confirmed in other hotel studies to reach a definitive model of national culture service quality relations? Another question raised the

improved model is whether additional mechanisms exist. In other words, are there further mechanisms that can explain additional relationships between national culture dimensions and service quality gaps in the hotel sector? In an attempt to answer the above two questions, the improved model (M1) is evaluated in two further hotel case studies in a second empirical investigation. In the next chapter, this second empirical investigation will be reported in order to answer the above two questions and develop a final model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector.

## **5.7 Summary**

The first Egyptian hotel case study (EG) and the first Dutch hotel case study (NL) formed the first empirical investigations needed to evaluate the prototype model (M0) of national culture-service quality relations. In each study, service quality gaps and national culture dimensions were empirically investigated. In doing so, coding analysis procedures were used in order to discover and conceptualize mechanisms by which national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps. After conceptualizing these mechanisms in the two hotel case studies, a comparison between the Egyptian (EG) and the Dutch (NL) studies was made. As a result, an improved mode (M1) of national culture-service quality relations was developed at the end of this chapter.

Moreover, two important questions for further consideration resulted from the improved model. Firstly whether the model-mechanisms are consistently found between the national dimensions and the service quality gaps in other hotels. In other words, can these mechanisms be confirmed elsewhere to reach a final model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector? Secondly, whether additional mechanisms exist and defined. In other words, are there further mechanisms that can explain additional relationships between national culture dimensions and service quality gaps? In the next chapter, a second set of empirical investigations is carried out to evaluate the improved model (M1) and answer the above two questions. After this, a final model of national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector will be developed and presented.

## **Chapter 6. The Second Empirical Investigation: Emphasizing the Mechanisms**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The second empirical investigation is reported in this chapter. The task is to evaluate the improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations that was an output of the first empirical investigation (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.7, p. 153). Here, another two empirical hotel case studies (one Egyptian and one Dutch) are conducted. In Section 6.2, the second Egyptian hotel (MIS) case study is comprehensively presented. Similarly, the second Dutch hotel (NED) case study is discussed in Section 6.3. To develop the final model (M2) of national culture - service quality relations, Section 6.4 compares these two case studies and ends with a presentation of the final model for the hotel sector.

### **6.2 The Second Egyptian Hotel Case Study (MIS)**

#### **6.2.1 Introduction**

The second Egyptian hotel's name is confidential and it is referred to as the MIS hotel case study. As with the first empirical investigation, the MIS case description starts with an overview of the hotel followed by an extensive description of the two studied elements: service quality behaviors and practices related to the internal service quality gaps (Information Gap 1, Specifications Gap 2, Performance Gap 3, and Communications Gap 4) and then national culture values and beliefs in terms of the four national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long-/short- term orientation). In presenting these two studied elements, the research approach is to show significant empirical examples of each element.

The MIS investigation started in January 2006 with a preliminary meeting with the general manager of the hotel and served as a general introduction to the research and its aims. Following this, thirteen interviews were carried out with: the general manager (as an interviewee), the accounting & financial manager, the marketing & sales manager, human resources manager, the reception & reservation manager, the food & beverage manager, the housekeeping manager, three frontline service employees from different departments: one from hotel reception, one from housekeeping and one from the hotel restaurant, and finally three senior supervisors from the same departments. In addition, empirical observations covered three hotel areas: the hotel reception, the restaurant and some hotel rooms.

Finally, various types of formal MIS documents were also collected and two hotel guests meetings were conducted. In the following sections, some key features that describe the internal service quality gaps and national culture dimensions are discussed. The MIS Examples are openly coded as (MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3 ...MIS 24). The MIS 1 code refers to the first example of the first service quality gap (Information Gap1). The MIS 2 code refers to the second example of the first service quality gap, and finally the MIS 24 code refers to the third example of the last culture dimension labeled short-term orientation.

#### **6.2.2 Service Quality Gaps:**

In order to gain empirical insights about service quality behaviors and practices in the MIS hotel, the focus was wide ranging: how did MIS members behave and what did they practice to deliver a high quality of service for their hotel guests? Which criteria did they use in delivering a high service quality? Which problems did they tackle to control or improve the quality of their hotel services? The dialogue with MIS staff members provided a wealth of

empirical examples or evidence concerning the service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4). The following discussion empirically details the service quality gaps using the “*Examples*” that describe how the hotel staff members close/eliminate the internal service gaps. In other words, the examples describe what the interviewees are saying and how they saying it. Through using these examples an attempt is made to understand how interviewees interpret certain events and practices of service quality.

- **Service Quality Gap 1**

**Example (MIS 1):** The MIS general manager said that “*even when a hotel is a medium-sized one like ours, the hierarchy of management levels should be maintained and considered, as this kind of hierarchy facilitates the guests’ information and lets the top managers accrue more information than lower levels*”. The general manager interpreted the existence of such a hierarchy by saying that “*as senior hotel staff members always direct people in the frontline positions, they (seniors) should know more about the guests than their juniors. In other words, the hierarchy of management levels reflects who should transfer and raise guest information to whom and it also reflects who directs whom towards meeting these guest expectations and needs. We call this “the power of guest information” within our hotel*”.

**Example (MIS 1) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 53)

- **Management levels:**  
Top-down structure (hierarchical) for guest information flows.

**Example (MIS 2):** According to the hotel’s general manager, “*finding out what hotel guests expect is essential, but these expectations are difficult to predict and even to investigate*”. According to him, “*exploring hotel guests’ expectations and needs always starts when they [guest] have already arrived at the hotel; a lot of formal papers and reports are written and communicated concerning such guests*”. Giving more details, the general manager said that “*we can never lose sight of that fact that this hotel has a lot of rules, and procedures show how the top management should depend on guest information that is formally passed on and communicated to top managers from service employees*”. Finally, he said that, “*formal communication channels within our hotel are working quite well in order to know more and more about our guests and their needs and also to reduce uncertainty surrounding such expectations*”.

**Example (MIS 2) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Upward communication:**  
Formalization to generate, communicate and share guest information.

**Example (MIS 3):** The MIS marketing & sales manager said that, “*through our formal internal communication channels we can answer a lot of questions concerning hotel guests’ expectations; such as what types of expectations guests have with our hotel services, what factors most influence the formation of these expectations, what role do these factors play in changing expectation, and how can hotel management meet guest expectations*”. From his perspective, external marketing research is risky and its results are highly uncertain. He explained this by saying that “*compare with MIS internal channels for gathering and sharing guest information, external marketing research is useless and risky, simply because guests expectations are always uncertain and not predicable*”. Finally, he gave an example by telling

that “for me as a marketing and sales manager, a formal report, coming from the reception desk, which describes room reservation complaints is more usable than investigating guest expectations over room reservations”.

**Example (MIS 3) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Marketing research orientation:**  
Internal marketing research.
- **Upward communication:**  
Formalization to generate, communicate and share guest information.

- **Service Quality Gap 2**

**Example (MIS 4):** According to the MIS general manager, “within the MIS hotel, service quality standards and specifications emphasise investment returns and profit. Gaining such money and increasing the annual profit allow the hotel management to improve hotel service quality compared with our main competitors”. The general manager made it clear that cost reduction is seen as another name for increased hotel profits. He added that “the hotel management’s goal and commitment to service quality is reflected in the hotel’s internally-defined efficiency specifications and standards. Such internal financial efficiency is required to be certain and ensure that the MIS hotel can compete and survive in the hotel business this year as years before”. Finally, he concluded by saying “if the hotel management does not achieve high annual retuning; I, as a general manager, will be uncertain and unsure that we can deliver good service quality in this hotel”

**Example (MIS 4) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990,p. 73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel’s internal financial efficiency: investment retuning, profit and cost reduction.
- **Standardization:**  
Service quality standards emphasise cost reduction and profit as main strategic goals.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside-out in setting service quality specifications & standards.  
Service quality goals are short-term oriented.

**Example (MIS 5):** The food & beverage manager said that “generally, creating food and beverage standards and specifications that address guest expectations is not a common goal in this hotel. What exactly happens is that we create food and beverage specifications that firstly match the hotel’s cost reduction strategy and policy, and then try to convince the hotel guests about what we offer”. Giving an example he said that “if a restaurant guest arrives five minutes after closing time, it is quite acceptable for us to let him/her eat but from a different menu and of course a different price list”.

**Example (MIS 5) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to internal financial efficiency: investment return, profit and cost reduction.
- **Standardization:**  
Service quality standards emphasise cost reduction and profit as main strategic goals.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside-out in setting service quality goals.  
Service quality goals are operational and short-term

**Example (MIS 6):** The MIS front office manager stated that “*within MIS hotel, the translation of guest expectations and needs into specific quality standards depends on financial efficiency as the dominant target and goal. For instance, our room reservation computer program is quite old and slow, but a new one would be quite expensive and costly. As a result, the hotel receptionists are still working with the old one and the hotel management knows that guests always complain about room reservations*”. The front office manager continued “*I know that hotel guests complain, but the committed hotel target is achieved*”.

**Example (MIS 6) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to internal financial efficiency: investment return, profit and cost reduction.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking inside out in setting service quality goals.  
Service quality goals are operational and short term.

• **Service Quality Gap 3**

**Example (MIS 7):** A restaurant waiter at said that “*in the event that a restaurant guest does not like the delivered meal and he/she asks for another dish, the restaurant captain, my boss, is the person to take the decision, not me, about offering the guest another dish with/without charging him/her*”. The waiter added and concluded that “*in the MIS restaurant, there is only one senior captain who controls all the waiters and food servers and of course he is like our father*”.

**Example (MIS 7) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.92-93)

- **Perceived control:**  
Centralization and no empowerment.  
Direct and tight control.

**Example (MIS 8):** A cleaning lady stated that, “*frontline service employees like cleaners often experience role conflict, the main point being that they should, but of course cannot, satisfy all the demands of their bosses, hotel rules and regulations and hotel guests*”. She added “*as what happens with guests is always different from one guest to another, and I am never sure what guests will ask me next time I clean their room, it is quite reasonable to apply what the hotel book exactly says, I mean the hotel’s formal rules and procedures*”. She

continued by saying that “*from my first working day here, I have been told that following the hotel rules for cleaning is very critical in order to stay in my job and also to perform well*”.

**Example (MIS 8) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Role conflict:**  
High conflict in terms of satisfying hotel rules, bosses and guests.
- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection or hiring of hotel staff members follow the hotel rules and systems.

**Example (MIS 9):** A MIS receptionist answered a question by saying that, “*personnel relationships between bosses and subordinates and also relationships among colleagues are very critical and important where I work in this hotel. For instance, a new receptionist can be selected to work here or even quickly promoted simply because one of his/her ingroup (friends, relatives etc.) has a good reputation for being loyal to hotel management*”.

**Example (MIS 9) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection or hiring of hotel members depends on ingroup not performed tasks.
- **Supervisory control system**  
Relationship and group-related performance criteria.

• **Service Quality Gap 4**

**Example (MIS 10):** The MIS financial manager stated that “*in our department, we deal with a lot of returned bills that guest’s refuse to pay before correction, this happens simply because the prices on hotel advertising often differ to what should actually be paid when the service is delivered*”. He added “*to solve this problem, the hotel marketing people, the front desk, and the food & beverage departments should pay more attention to working in a cooperative way*”.

**Example (MIS 10) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across hotel departments and functions.  
Various procedures across departments and functions.

**Example (MIS 11):** A cleaner said that, “*on many days, we, the cleaners, find guests still eating their breakfasts in their rooms having ordered a room service breakfast, but we often do not have any note or message from the reception or room service division about cleaning such rooms later and to let guests finish their breakfast*”.

**Example (MIS 11) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across the hotel departments and functions.



**Example (MIS 12):** From the answers of the MIS marketing & sales manager “*creating or designing new hotel advertising should reflect what actually is delivered for guests but, in many cases, it is uncertain to completely predict, control and direct what actually happens. In this area, and following the hotel rules, our department is responsible for advertising but has no responsibility about what actually happens in service encounters*”. Giving an example, he said that, “*if hotel guests see advertising showing our swimming pool with opening hours of 8:00 am-7:00 pm and, at the same time, the guests actually find that the pool is closed at 5:00 pm, it is not our department’s problem; it is the Health Club and Spa department’s problem*”. In his view, “*to solve this problem, the Health Club and Spa department should formally inform us why they close the pool at 5:00 pm and not 7:00 pm*”

**Example (MIS 12) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication:**  
Inadequate horizontal communications across the hotel departments or functions.  
Formal communication channels among departments and functions.

### 6.2.3 National Culture Dimensions:

- **Power Distance**

**Example (MIS 13):** A MIS receptionist said that “*I have been working at this hotel for 5 years, and during this time I have never shown disagreement with my boss as simply he can determine what I do here on this reception desk rather than vice versa*”. He confirmed that “*at the MIS, if you, as external observer, go up through the hotel hierarchical managerial levels, you will find more high status and more respectable people, more information, more authority in terms of more up-down orders and also decisions*”.

**Example (MIS 13) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Inequality of power:**  
Inequality of power is expected and desired.
- **Hierarchy:**  
Hierarchy reflects inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs.
- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.

**Example (MIS 14):** A MIS waiter stated that “*many times and maybe every time, the restaurant captain walks with me when I put the dishes on the guest table as he, the captain, asks the guests about the ordered food, and then gives decisions and directions to follow based on the guests’ comments and requests*”. The waiter continued by noting that “*in the case of the captain’s absence, the senior waiter regularly does the same*”.

**Example (MIS 14) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.
- **Centralization:**  
Bosses always decide and order.

**Example (MIS 15):** The MIS general manager commented saying that “*managers and bosses’ authority survives only at the MIS hotel when it matched by hotel subordinates’ obedience*”.

**Example (MIS 15) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Inequality of power:**  
Inequality of power is expected and desired.
- **Hierarchy:**  
Hierarchy reflects inequality between higher-ups and lower-downs
- **Dependence:**  
Subordinates are dependent on bosses.  
Subordinates expect to be told what to do.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance**

**Example (MIS 16):** The MIS food & beverage manager said that “*food & beverage is the first department that costs the hotel management a lot of money by buying food and beverages. Here, commitment to cost reduction as a critical objective or goal and is very important but, of course and at the same time, it is very dangerous and uncertain to deal with and so continuously achieve this goal*”.

**Example (MIS 16) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 125)

- **Uncertainty (strong)**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened from unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous.

**Example (MIS 17):** A restaurant waiter said that “*servicing in this restaurant has a lot of stress and also clashes between what the guests ask me on the one hand and what the hotel rules say and emphasise on the other*”. From the waiter’s point of view, it is quite safe and not dangerous, at least for him, to follow the rules. He gave an example by saying that “*one of the hotel guests asked if he could take the rest of his meal with him, and I simply said to him that the hotel rules say no*”. Finally, he concluded “*I do not know what would happen to me if I gave the rest of the meal to the hotel guest, but what I know from the start of working here that the hotel management emphasizes that service employees should follow the hotel book*”.

**Examples (MIS 17) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 125)

- **Uncertainty (strong)**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Emotional need for rules:**  
Following and respect of rules.  
Rules reduce uncertainty
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened by unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous.

**Example (MIS 18):** The housekeeping manager stated that “*breaking the hotel rules and internal procedures is a kind of risk. For instance, the time expected, to clean one room by two cleaners is 15 minutes, so if the two cleaners spend 20 minutes on a few rooms (clean*

three or four rooms), this means that there will be one or two rooms that are not cleaned at the end of the day". The housekeeping manager continued by saying that "if the two cleaners do this, they must formally report and send information about what exactly happened, at least to be certain how this situation can be solved and then not repeated". Finally he added "when a problem is related to other departments, I send a formal description for the head of this department to solve the problem".

**Example (MIS 18) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (strong)**  
Uncertainty is felt as a continuous threat, which must be fought.  
Low acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Emotional need for rules:**  
Following and respect rules.  
Rules reduce uncertainty.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (low):**  
Feeling threatened from unknown situations.  
What is different is dangerous.

- **Individualism/Collectivism**

**Example (MIS 19):** The front office manager said "I have been working here for 20 years, so I consider that we, the hotel staff members working at the MIS hotel are a big family, and relationships among this family's members are quite important in managing our daily hotel life"

**Example (MIS 19) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991,p. 67)

- **Management is management of group:**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral terms.**

**Example (MIS 20):** The MIS general manager stated that "the MIS hotel staff is considered and seen as one well-known group, not a collection of individuals, so the hotel management always keeps the relationships among hotel members like family relations"

**Example (MIS 20) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of group**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral terms**

**Example (MIS 21):** A receptionist stated that "the MIS hotel never hires just an individual, but a person who belongs to an ingroup such as family, relatives or trust friends of employees who already work here". The receptionist commented that "such collective relationships also exist when the hotel staff members are promoted, evaluated, rewarded and even fired". Giving an example, he said that "last year, there was a group of 35 Germans who arrived two hours early, and because of that I was not servicing well with two other colleagues and finally we did finish the room allocations and reservations but not exactly like the German guests wanted and expected. However, and because one of those two colleagues was the son of the front office manager, the three of us were positively rewarded".

**Example (MIS 21) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.67)

- **Management is management of group**  
High dependence on the hotel as ingroup.  
A sense of belonging to the hotel.
- **Hiring and promotion decisions take employees' ingroup into account**
- **Personnel relationships prevail over the task.**
- **Employer-employee relationship is perceived in moral term**

- **Long- v. Short-Term Orientation**

**Example (MIS 22):** A cleaning lady said that *"in a country like Egypt, getting a job is quite difficult, so I work here three days a week just to earn some money for my family"*.

**Example (MIS 22) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
Financial benefits are seen quickly attained results or achievements.  
Respect for traditions and concern with face.  
Concern with possessing the truth.

**Example (MIS 23):** The MIS food & beverage manager said, *"getting a considerable monthly payment is the most important target from working and staying here at this hotel"*. He continued by saying that *"I always financially compare what I got in the past with what I get now and, if the money goes up, I believe that I have successfully achieved my goals"*.

**Example (MIS 23) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
Financial benefits are quickly attained results or achievements.  
Concern with possessing the Truth.  
Past and present orientation.

**Example (MIS 24):** The MIS hotel general manager stated that *"as the general manager of the hotel, the financial efficiency is important for my personnel career and work"*. He gave an example by saying that *"as we are aiming and committed to making a profit from running this hotel business, I also aim to earn a matching amount of money for what I do for this hotel"*.

**Example (MIS 24) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Quick (short-term) results:**  
Financial benefits are quickly attained results or achievements.  
Past and present orientation.

## 6.2.4 National Culture - Service Quality Relations within the MIS Hotel Case

By using the two analysis streams with the empirical *Examples* (on service quality gaps and cultural dimensions), the uncovered mechanisms can be presented partly in this section and more fully in the next section (Section 6.2.5) to evaluate the improved model (M1). In doing

so, two coding procedures are followed. In this section, the twenty-four examples from MIS hotel case are coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture. Then in the next section (Section 6.2.5), the empirical “*Examples*” will be analysed in order to find adequate mechanisms that link them. In other words, this means that the examples will be broken apart and then reconstructed to form an interpretive scheme for the improved model (M1) complete with mechanisms. In carrying out these two coding procedures, the axial and selective coding techniques suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) are employed.

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 1)**

Starting with power distance and first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) codes (MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15, MIS 1, MIS 2, and MIS 3), these six codes can refer to the improved model cell number 1, 1 (column 1, row 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.1). Examining each of these codes means understanding what the interviewee answered, said and how he/she interpreting certain events, acts and outcomes. Accordingly, examining these six examples enables one to explain how power distance dimension affects the first service quality gap (Gap 1) within the second Egyptian hotel case and by which mechanisms:

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,1)
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15	

**Table 6.1 The First Cell in the Improved Model (1, 1)**

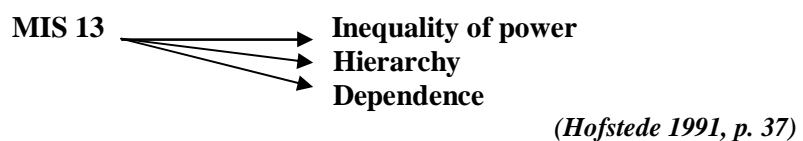
To begin, the examination and analysis start with the MIS 13 code. According to this code, the MIS receptionist said:

1. “*I have never shown disagreement with my boss as simply he can determine what I do here on this reception desk rather than vice versa*”
2. “*will find more high status and high status and more respectable people, more information and authority*”
3. “*in terms of more up-down orders and also decisions*”

Expressions such as *I have never shown disagreement with my boss, simply he can determine, what I do here, high status and more respectable people, more information, and authority, more up-down orders and also decisions* can be classified into three categories of large power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37). These three categories are:

1. ***Inequality of Power***
2. ***Hierarchy***
3. ***Dependence***

These categories reflect the large power distance that exists among the MIS staff members such as the large power distance between supervisors/bosses and their subordinates. Large power distance refers to big status difference between the boss and subordinates within the MIS hotel case. It also means that subordinates are dependent on supervisors/bosses, and they expected to be told what to do.



Also, according to the MIS 13 code, the MIS receptionist said:

1. “*go up through the hotel hierarchical managerial levels*”
2. “*more information*”
3. “*more up-down orders and also decisions*”.

Expressions such as *go up through the hotel hierarchical managerial levels, more information, more up-down orders and also decisions* can be classified into one category of first service quality gap (Information Gap1) based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53). This category is:

1. **Management Levels**



According to MIS 14 code, the restaurant waiter said:

1. “*the captain gives decisions and directions to follow*”
2. “*in the case of the captain’s absence, the senior waiter regularly does the same*”

Expressions such as *the captain gives decisions and directions to follow, in the case of captain’s absence, the senior waiter regularly does the same* can be classified into two categories of power distance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. **Dependence**
2. **Centralization**

These two categories also reflect the large power distance within the MIS hotel. Large power distance also means that subordinates such as frontline service employees are dependent on their supervisors/bosses, and they expected to be told what to do. Finally large power distance means centralization in terms of supervisors/bosses always decide and order.

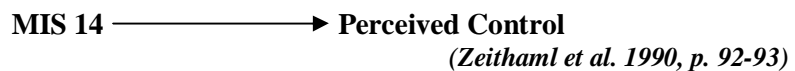


In addition, according to the MIS 14 code, the MIS restaurant waiter said:

1. “*the restaurant captain walks with me when I put the dishes on the guest table*”
2. “*as he, the captain, asks the guest about the ordered food*”

Expressions such as *the restaurant captain walks with me when I put the dishes on the guest table, as he, the captain, asks the guest about the ordered food* can be classified in a single category of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), this category is:

1. **Perceived Control (less)**



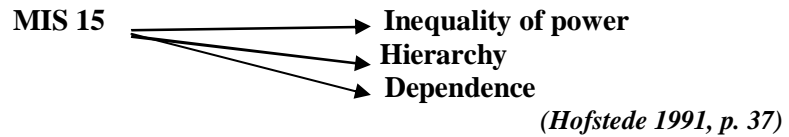
In line with MIS 15 code, the general manager said:

1. “*managers and bosses’ authority survives only at the MIS hotel when it matched by hotel subordinates’ obedience*”

Expressions such as *managers and bosses’ authority survives only at the MIS hotel when it matched by hotel subordinates’ obedience* can be classified into three categories of large power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these three categories are:

1. **Inequality of power**
2. **Hierarchy**
3. **Dependence**

These categories refer to the larger power distance that exists among the MIS members such as the large power distance between managers or supervisors/ bosses and subordinates. It also means that MIS subordinates are dependent on their supervisors, and they expected to be told what to do.



The MIS 15 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Moving to the first service quality gap codes, according to the MIS 1 code; the general manager said:

1. “the hierarchy of management levels should be maintained and considered”
2. “this kind of hierarchy facilitate the guests’ information”
3. “lets the top managers accrue more information than other lowers”
4. “they (seniors) should know more about guests than their juniors”

Expressions such as *the hierarchy of management levels should be maintained and considered, this kind of hierarchy facilitate the guests’ information, lets the top managers accrue more information than other lowers, they (seniors) should know more about guests than their juniors* can be classified into one category of the information gap 1 using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. **Management Levels**



Also, according to the MIS 1 code, the general manager also said:

1. “hierarchy of management levels should be maintained and considered”
2. “this kind of hierarchy facilitates the guests’ information”
3. “lets the top managers accrue more information than other lowers”
4. “the hierarchy of management levels reflects”
5. “who should transfer & raise guest’s information to whom”
6. “the power of guests’ information within our hotel”

Expressions such as *hierarchy of management levels, kind of hierarchy, top managers accrue more information than other lowers, the power of guests’ information within our hotel* can be classified in to two categories of large power distance using Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.37), these two categories are:

1. **Inequality of power**
2. **Hierarchy**

The top-down management levels in the MIS hotel reflect that the guests’ information is shared and reported within hierarchical levels. This means also that that guest information is not generalized and easily obtained, but it can be shared within such hierarchy.



According to the MIS 2 code, the MIS general manager said:

1. “exploring hotel guests’ expectations and needs”
2. “a lot of formal papers and reports are written and communicated”
3. “that formally passed on and communicated to top managers from service employee”
4. “formal communication channels within our hotel are quite working well in order to know more and more about our guests and their needs”

Expressions such as, *a lot of formal papers and reports are written and communicated, that formally passed on and communicated to top managers from service employee, formal communication channels within our hotel are quite working well, formal communication channels within our hotel are quite working well to know more and more about our guests and their needs* can be classified into one category of Information Gap 1 based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53), this category is:

1. **Upward Communications**



Also, according to the MIS 2 code, the general manager said:

1. *“but these expectations are difficult to predict and even to investigate”*
2. *“a lot of formal papers and reports are written concerning those guests”*
3. *“this hotel has a lot of rules and procedure”*
4. *“show how the top management should depends on guests’ information”*
5. *“also to reduce uncertainty surrounding of such expectations”*

Expressions such as *but these expectations are difficult to predict and even to investigate, a lot of formal papers and reports are written concerning those guests, this hotel has a lot of rules and procedure, show how the top management should depends on guests’ information, also to reduce uncertainty of surrounding such expectations* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37). These three categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **Need for rules**



Finally, regarding to MIS 3, the marketing & sales manager stated that:

1. *“through our internal formal communication channels”*
2. *“external marketing research is useless and risky”*
3. *“ a formal report, coming from the reception desk”*
4. *“which describes room reservation complains is more usable than investigating guests’ expectations over room reservations”*

Expressions such as *through our internal formal communication channels, a formal report, coming from the reception desk, external marketing research is useless and risky, which describes room reservation complains is more usable than, investigating guests’ expectations over room reservations* can be classified into two categories of service quality information (Gap1) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), these two categories are:

1. **Upward communication (formal)**
2. **Marketing Research**

Formal communication within the MIS hotel means that the guests’ information is formally shared and reported in order to close/eliminate or deal with the first service quality gap (Gap 1). It means also that guest information is not generalized and easily obtained.



Also, regarding to MIS 3, the marketing & sales manager said:

1. *the external marketing research is risky and its results are highly uncertain*
2. *“guests expectations are always uncertain and not predicable”*



Expressions such as **the external marketing research is risky and its results are highly uncertain, guests expectations are always uncertain and not predicable** can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125). This category is:

1. *Uncertainty (strong)*



**Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 1)**

By examining power distance and the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between large power distance and the first service quality gap (Gap 1). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 13 on one hand with MIS 1 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (1, 1) as illustrated in the next Table (6.1.1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1	
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13	MIS 13 Inequality Hierarchy Management levels	MIS 1 Management levels Inequality Hierarchy	: : : : :

**Table 6.1.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 1)**

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

Within the Improved model cell (column 1, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and the information gap 1 (MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18, MIS 1, MIS 2, and MIS 3) as illustrated in the following Table (6.2):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,2)	

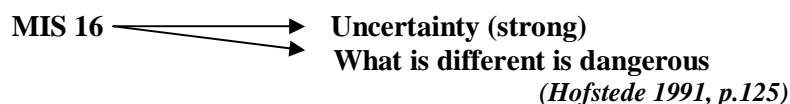
**Table 6.2 The Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance dimension can affect the first service quality gap and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with code MIS 16. According to this code, the MIS food & beverage manager said:

1. *“it is very dangerous and uncertain to deal with and so continuously achieve this goal”*

Expressions such as *it is very dangerous and uncertain to deal with and so continuously achieve this goal* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty*
2. *What is different is dangerous*

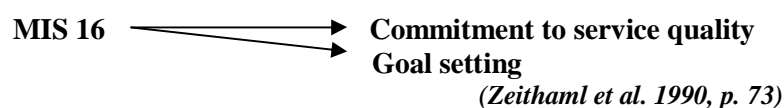


Also, according to the MIS16, the MIS food & beverage said:

1. *“the first department that costs the hotel management a lot of money”*
2. *“by buying food & beverages, here, commitment to cost reduction”*
3. *“as a critical objective or goal is very important so continuously achieve this goal”*

Expressions such as *the first department that costs the hotel management a lot of money, because buying food & beverages, in this case commitment to cost reduction, as a critical objective or goal is very important so continuously achieve this goal* can be classified into two main categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73), these two categories are:

1. **Commitment to service quality**
2. **Goal setting**



In the view of MIS 17 code, a restaurant waiter said:

1. *“what the hotel rules say and emphasis”*
2. *it is quite safe and not dangerous, at least for him, to follow the rules*
3. *“I simply said to him that the hotel rules say no”*
4. *“should follow the hotel book”*

Expressions such as *what the hotel rules say and emphasis, it is quite safe and not dangerous, at least for him, to follow the rules, I simply said to him that the hotel rules say no, should follow the hotel book* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **Emotional need for rules**



Also, according to the MIS 17, the MIS restaurant waiter said:

1. *“serving in his restaurant has a lot of stress”*
2. *“clash between what guests ask me and what the hotel rules say and emphasis on”*
3. *“I simply said to him that the hotel rules say no”*
4. *“but what I know from the start of working here”*
5. *“the hotel management emphasizes on that service employee should follow the hotel book”*

Expressions such as *serving in his restaurant has a lot of stress, clash between what the guests ask me and what the hotel rules say and emphasis on, I simply said to him that the hotel rules say no, but what I know from the start of working here, that the hotel management emphasizes on that service employee should follow the hotel book* can be classified into two main categories of the third service quality gap 3 (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. **Role Conflict**
2. **Employee-Job Fit**



In the view of MIS 18 code, the housekeeping manager said:

1. “*breaking the hotel rules and internal procedures is kind of risk*”
2. “*at least to be certain how this situation can be solved and then not repeated*”

Expressions such as *breaking the hotel rules and internal procedures is kind of risk, at least to be certain how this situation can be solved and then not repeated* can be integrated into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (strong)*
2. *Emotional need for rules*

In this view, the MIS staff members have a strong emotional need for rules, policies and procedures that represent written arrangements to be respected and followed. For the MIS members, a lot of problems can be solved by such official rules. On the other hand, without these hotel written rules & procedures, the MIS members feel that they are in ambiguous situations. Furthermore, these rules make events clearly interpretable and predictable.

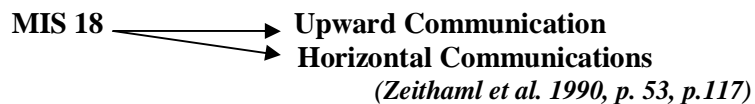


Also, According to MIS 18 the housekeeping manager said that:

1. “*if the two cleaners do this, they must formally report and send information about what exactly happened*”
2. “*when a problem is related to other department*”
3. “*I send a formal description for the head of this department to solve the problem*”

Expressions such as *if the two cleaners do this, they must formally report and send information about what exactly happened, when a problem is related to other department, I send a formal description for the head of this department to solve the problem* can be classified into one category of the first service quality gap and another category of the fourth service quality gap (Communication gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 53, p.117), these two main categories are:

1. *Upward Communications (formal)*
2. *Horizontal Communications (formal)*



### Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 2)

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the first gap (Information Gap 1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap (Gap 1). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 18 on one hand with MIS 2 and MIS 3 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (1, 2).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Information Gap 1 MIS 2, MIS 3			
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 18	<table style="border: none; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>MIS 18</b>                      Uncertainty strong                      Need for Rules                       Upward                      Communication                 </td> <td style="width: 5%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">                     .....                 </td> <td style="width: 45%; vertical-align: top;"> <b>MIS 2, MIS 3</b>                      Upward                      Communication.                       Uncertainty strong                      Need for Rules                 </td> </tr> </table>	<b>MIS 18</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules  Upward Communication	.....	<b>MIS 2, MIS 3</b> Upward Communication.  Uncertainty strong Need for Rules
<b>MIS 18</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules  Upward Communication	.....	<b>MIS 2, MIS 3</b> Upward Communication.  Uncertainty strong Need for Rules		

**Table 6.2.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

Considering all codes of collectivism/individualism and the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), the examination of these codes (MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21, MIS 1, MIS 2, and MIS 3) represents the improved model cell number (1, 3) as illustrated in the following Table (6.3).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Information Gap 1 MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,3)

**Table 6.3 The Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

Starting with code MIS 19, the front office manager stated that:

1. *“so I consider that we, the hotel staff members, are a big family”*
2. *“relationships among this family’s members are quite important in managing our daily hotel life”*

Expressions such as *so I consider that we, hotel staff members are a big family, relationships among this family’s members, are quite important in managing our daily hotel life* can be integrated and classified into two categories of collectivism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these two categories are:

1. **Management is management of group**
2. **Employer-employee relationship is moral**

These two categories refer to the collectivism values among the MIS hotel case. They also mean that MIS hotel members highly value their personal relationships with each others.



The MIS 19 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Moving to the MIS 20 code, the general manager said that:

1. *“the MIS hotel staff is considered and seen as one well known group not a collection of individuals”*
2. *“so the hotel management always keeps the relationship among hotel members like a family relations”*

Expressions such as *the MIS hotel staff is considered and seen as one well known group not a collection of individuals, so the hotel management always keeps the relationship among hotel members like a family relations* can also be classified into two categories of collectivism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these two categories refer to the collectivism values among the MIS hotel:

1. *Management is management of group*
2. *Employer-employee relationship is moral*



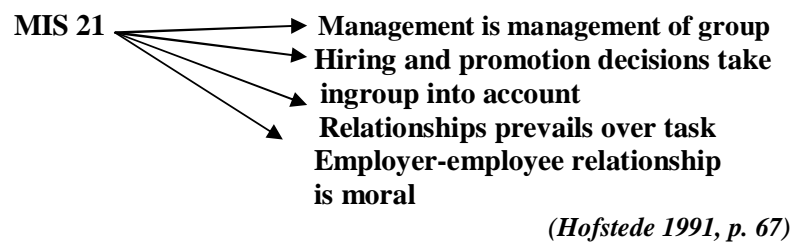
The MIS 20 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Finally, regarding to the MIS 21 code, a MIS receptionist said that:

1. *“the MIS hotel never hires just an individual”*
2. *“but a person who belongs to an ingroup such as family ,relatives or trust friends of employees who already work here”*
3. *“such collective relationships also exists when the hotel staff members promoted, evaluated rewarded and even fired”*
4. *“because one of those two colleagues was the son of the front office manager, the three of us positively rewarded”*

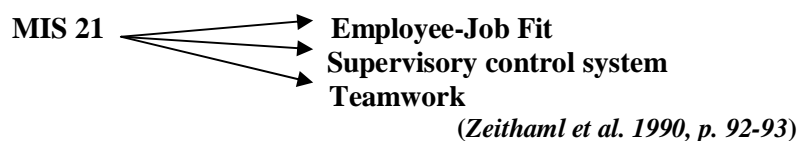
Expressions such as *the MIS hotel never hires just an individual, but a person who belong to an ingroup such as family, relatives or trust friends of employees who already work here, such collective relationships is also existing when the hotel members promoted, evaluated rewarded and even fired because one of those two colleagues was the son of the front office manager, the three of us positively rewarded* can be classified into four categories of collectivism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These four categories are:

1. *Management is management of group*
2. *Hiring and promotion decisions take employee’ ingroup into account*
3. *Relationship prevails over tasks*
4. *Employer-employee relationship is moral*



Also, the above expressions can be classified into three categories of the third service gap (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93), these three categories are:

1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*
3. *Teamwork*



**Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

The examination of individualism/collectivism and first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a relation between collectivism dimension and the first service quality gap (Gap1). In other words, collectivism codes cannot empirically explain why guests’ information is formally conducted, reported and communicated along with a hierarchical structure within the MIS hotel. In this case, the collectivism within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide direct interpretations over the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>	

**Table 6.3.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of long/short- term orientation and the first service quality (Information Gap 1), the examination of these six codes (MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24, MIS 1, MIS 2, and MIS 3) represents the improved model cell number (1, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,4)	

**Table 6.4 The Improved Model Cell (1, 4)**

Regarding to the MIS 22 code, a cleaning lady said that:

1. *“in a country like Egypt, getting a job is quite difficult, so I work here 3 days a week just to earn some money for my family”*

Expressions such as *in a country like Egypt, getting a job is quite difficult, so I work here 3 days a week just to earn some money for my family* can be integrated into one category of short-term orientation dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

1. **Quick Results or Achievements**

This category refers to the short-term orientation among the MIS hotel members. It also represents short-term goals or needs that MIS members aim to achieve as a clear sign of their personnel stability. Regarding to this category, the MIS hotel members tend to be past and present oriented not future oriented in their achievements.



The MIS 22 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

In the view of MIS 23 code, the MIS food& beverage manager said:

1. *“getting a considerable monthly payment is the most important target from*



hotel. In this case, the short-term orientation within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the first service quality gap (Gap 1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.4.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 4)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

Taking into account all codes of large power distance and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2), the examination of these six codes (MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15, MIS 4, MIS 5, and MIS 6) represents the improved model cell number (2, 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.5).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15		<b>Model Cell</b> (2, 1)

**Table 6.5 The Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

Starting with code MIS 4, according to this code, the general manager said that:

1. *“within the MIS hotel, service quality standards and specifications emphasis investment returns and profit”*
2. *“gaining such money and increasing the annual profit allow the hotel management to improve hotel service quality”*
3. *“the hotel management’s goal and commitment to service quality is reflected in the hotel’s internal-defined efficiency specifications and standards”*

Expressions such as *service quality standards and specifications emphasis investment returns and profit, Gaining such money and increasing the annual profit allow the hotel management to improve hotel service quality, the hotel management’s goal and commitment to service quality is reflected in the hotel’s internal-defined efficiency specifications and standards* can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73). These three categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Standardization**
3. **Goal Setting**

In the MIS hotel, management commitment is to hotel internal strategic goals or targets such as cost reduction and profit. Also, Service quality standardization emphasizes on cost reduction and making annual profits.



*(Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73)*

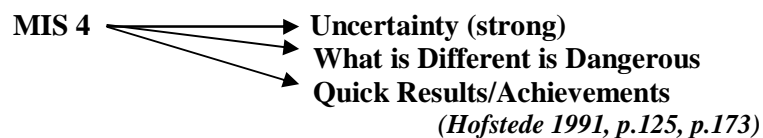


Also, according to MIS 4 code, the general manager said that:

1. *“emphasis investment returns and profit”*
2. *“gaining such money and increasing the annual profit”*
3. *“such internal financial efficiency is required to be certain and ensure that MIS hotel can compete and survive in the hotel business this year as years before”.*
4. *“if the hotel management does not achieve high annual retuning; I, as a general manager, will be uncertain and unsure that we can deliver good service quality in this hotel”*

Expressions such as *emphasis investment returns and profit, gaining such money and increasing the annual profit, such internal financial efficiency is required to be certain and ensure that MIS hotel can compete and survive in the hotel business this year as years before, if the hotel management does not achieve high annual retuning; I, as a general manager, will be uncertain and unsure that we can deliver good service quality in this hotel* can be classified in two main categories of strong uncertainty avoidance and one category of short-term orientation based on Hofstaeð’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125, p.173), these categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **What is Different is Dangerous**
3. **Quick Results or Achievements**



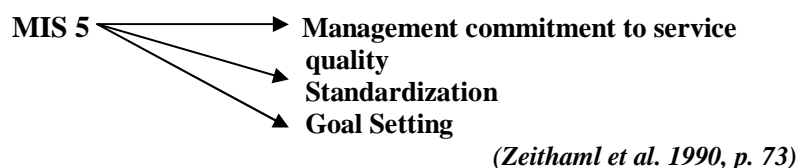
Regarding to the MIS 5 code, the food & beverage manager said that:

1. *“creating food and beverage standards and specifications that address guest expectations is not a common goal in this hotel”*
2. *“what exactly happens is that we create food and beverage specifications that firstly match and go with the hotel cost reduction strategy and policy and then try to convince the hotel guests about what we offer”*
3. *“if a restaurant guest came five minutes after closing times, it is quite acceptable for us to let him/her eat but from a different menu and of course a different price list”*

Expressions such as *creating food and beverage standards and specifications that address guest expectations is not a common goal in this hotel, what exactly happens is that we create food and beverage specifications that firstly match and go with the hotel cost reduction strategy and policy and then try to convince the hotel guests about what we offer, if a restaurant guest came five minutes after closing times, it is quite acceptable for us to let him/her eat but from different menu and of course a different price list* can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap ( Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73). These three categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Standardization**
3. **Goal Setting**

Within the MIS hotel, the top management commitment is to hotel internal goals or targets such as cost reduction and profit. Also, Service quality standardization emphasizes on cost reduction and making internal profits.



The MIS 5 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

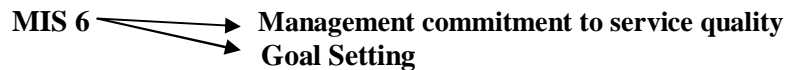
In line with code MIS 6, the front office manager said that:

1. *“the translation of guest expectations and needs into specific-quality standards depends on the financial efficiency as the dominate target and goal”*
2. *“our room reservation’s computer program is quite old and slow, but a new one would be quite expensive and costly”*
3. *“I know that, hotel guest complain, but the committed hotel target is achieved”*

Expressions such as *the translation of guest expectations and needs into specific-quality standards depends on the financial efficiency as the dominate target and goal, our room reservation’s computer program is quite old and slow, but a new one would be quite expensive and costly, I know that, hotel guest complain, but the committed hotel target is achieved* can be classified into two categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73). These three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Goal Setting*

In general, the MIS hotel management commitment is to hotel internal strategic goals or targets such as cost reduction and profit. Also, Service quality standardization emphasizes on cost reduction and making annual profits. Finally, service quality goal setting is more operational and top down operation.



*(Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73)*

The MIS 6 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

The examination of large power distance and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between large power distance and second service quality gap (Gap 2). Large power distance codes (MIS13, MIS 14, and MIS 15) are classified into three categories, which called inequality of power, hierarchy, dependence and centralization that cannot fully, explains the second service quality gap. In other words, power distance dimension cannot directly explain why MIS hotel management commitment to service quality is internal in terms of cost and profit focus. In this case, the large power distance within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>	

**Table 6.5.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

Within the improved model cell (column 2, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18, MIS 4, MIS 5, and MIS 6) as illustrated in the following Table (6.6):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,2)

**Table 6.6 The Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code MIS 16, MIS 17 and MIS 18 on pages 169-171 and followed by codes MIS 4, MIS 5 and finally MIS 6 on pages 176-178.

**Findings for Improve Model Cell (2, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and service quality specifications gap (Gap 2). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 16 on one hand with MIS 4 code on the other hand inside the improved model cell (2, 2) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 6.1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 16	<p><b>MIS 16</b> Uncertainty (strong) What is different is dangerous</p> <p>Management Commitment Goal Setting</p>	<p><b>MIS 4</b> Management Commitment Goal Setting</p> <p>Uncertainty (strong) What is different is dangerous</p>

**Table 6.6.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

Within the improved model cell (column 2, row 3), the examination involves the codes of collectivism dimension and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21, MIS 4, MIS 5, and MIS 6) as illustrated in the following Table (6.7):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,3)

**Table 6.7 The Prototype Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how collectivism can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes MIS19, MIS 20 and MIS 21 on pages 172-173 and followed by codes MIS 4, MIS 5 and finally MIS 6 in pages 176-178.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of collectivism and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between collectivism and second service quality gap (Gap 2). Collectivism codes (MIS 19, MIS 20, and MIS 21) are classified into four categories, which called management is management of group, relationship employer-employee is moral, hiring & promotion decisions take ingroup into account, and relationships prevails over task that cannot fully, explains the second service quality gap. In other words, collectivism dimension cannot directly explain why MIS hotel management commitment to service quality is internal in terms of cost and profit focus. In this case, the collectivism within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.7.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 2, row 4), the examination involves the codes of short-term orientation and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24, MIS 4, MIS 5, and MIS 6) as illustrated in the following Table (6.8):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,4)

**Table 6. 8 The Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how short-term orientation can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code MIS 22, MIS 23 and MIS 24 on pages 174-175 and followed by codes MIS 4, MIS 5 and finally MIS 6 on pages 176-178.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

By examining short-term orientation and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between short-term orientation and service quality specifications gap (Gap 2). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 24 on one hand with MIS 4 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (2, 4) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 8.1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> MIS 4	
<b>Short- Term Orientation</b> MIS 24		<b>MIS 24</b> Quick Results or Achievements  Management Commitment Goal Setting	<b>MIS 4</b> Management commitment Goal Setting  Quick Results or Achievements

Table 6.8.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 4)

**The Improved Model Cell (3, 1)**

Within the improved model cell (column 3, row 1), the examination involves the codes of power distance and third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) (MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15, MIS 7, MIS 8, and MIS 9) as illustrated in the following Table (6.9):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> MIS 7, MIS 8, MIS 8
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15		<b>Model Cell</b> (3,1)

Table 6.9 The Improved Model Cell (3, 1)

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how large power distance can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with code MIS 7.

According to this code (MIS 7), a restaurant waiter said:

1. *“in the event that a restaurant guest does not like the delivered meal and he/she asks for another dish”*
2. *“the restaurant captain, my boss, is the person to take the decision, not me*
3. *“to offer the guest another dish with/without charging him/her”*
4. *“in the MIS restaurant, there is only one senior captain who controls all waiters and food servers and of course he is like our father”*

Expressions such as *in the event that a restaurant guest does not like the delivered meal and he/she asks for another dish, the restaurant captain, my boss, is the person to take the decision, not me , to offer the guest another dish with/without charging him/her, in the MIS restaurant, there is only one senior captain who controls all waiters and food servers and of course he is like our father* can be classified into one category of service quality performance gap (gap 3) based on the Extended Gap model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, pp. 92-93), these categories are:

1. **Perceived Control (less)**



Also according to MIS 7, the restaurant waiter said:

1. *“my boss, is the person to take the decision, not me”*
2. *“in the MIS restaurant, there is only one senior captain who controls all waiters and food servers and of course he is like our father”*

Expressions such as *my boss, is the person who can take the decision not me, in the MIS restaurant, there is only one senior captain who controls all waiters and food servers and of*

*course he is like our father* can be classified into two categories of large power distance based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture. These categories are:

1. **Centralization**
2. **Dependence**

Indeed, these categories refer to the larger power distance that exists among the MIS members such as the large power distance between supervisors/bosses and subordinates. Large power distance means that subordinates are dependent on supervisors/bosses, and they expected to be told what to do. Finally large power distance means centralization in terms of supervisors/bosses who always decide and order.



(Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

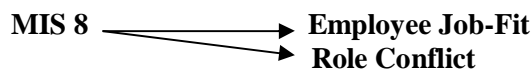
According to the MIS 8, a cleaning lady said that,

1. *“cleaners often experience role conflict”*
2. *“from my first working day here I have been told that following hotel rules for cleaning is very critical”*
3. *“in order to stay in my job and also to perfume well”*

Expressions such as *cleaners often experience role conflict, from my first working day here I have been told that following hotel rules for cleaning is very critical, in order to stay in my job and also to perfume well* can be classified into two categories of service quality performance gap (Gap 3), these categories are:

1. **Employee-Job Fit**
2. **Role Conflict**

Indeed these service quality categories refer to the high conflict existed in terms of satisfying the hotel rules or/and hotel supervisors/bosses and hotel guests. They also, refer to that selection process focus on to what extent the new employee will follow the hotel rules.



(Zeithaml et al. 1990, pp. 92-93)

Also according to the MIS 8, the cleaner said that:

1. *“satisfy all the demands of their bosses, hotel rules and regulations and hotel guests”*
2. *“as what happens with guests is always different from guest to another”*
3. *“I am never sure what guests will ask me next time I clean his/her room”*
4. *“so it is quite reasonable to apply what the hotel book exactly says”*
5. *“I mean the hotel's formal rules and procedures”*

Expressions such as *satisfy all the demands of their bosses, hotel rules and regulations and hotel guests, as what happens with guests is always different from guest to another, I am never sure what guests will ask me next time I clean his/her room, so it is quite reasonable to apply what the hotel book exactly says, I mean the hotel's formal rules and procedures* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these four categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **Need for Rules**



(Hofstede 1991, p. 125)

According to the MIS 9, receptionist said that:

1. “*personnel relationships between bosses and subordinates and also relationships among colleagues are very critical and important where I work in this hotel*”
2. “*for instance, a new receptionist can be selected to work here or even quickly promoted simply because one of his/her ingroup (friends, relatives etc.) has a good reputation for being a loyal for hotel management*”

Expressions such as *personnel relationships between bosses and subordinates and also relationships among colleagues are very critical and important where I work in this hotel. For instance, a new receptionist can be selected to work here or even quickly promoted simply because one of his/her ingroup (friends, relatives etc.) has a good reputation for being a loyal for hotel management* can be classified in two categories of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990 pp. 92-93), these categories are:

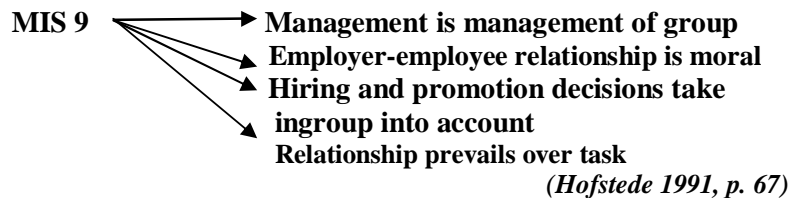
1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*

These service quality categories refer to the selection, evaluation, and rewards processes of MIS hotel members belong to relationships and ingroup not to the performed tasks.



The above expressions can also be classified in four categories of collectivism based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These four categories are:

1. *Management is management of group*
2. *Employer-employee relationship is moral*
3. *Hiring and promotion decisions take ingroup into account*
4. *Relationship prevails over task*



**Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 1)**

By examining power distance and the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between large power distance and this gap (Performance Gap 3). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 14 on one hand with MIS 7 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (3, 1) as illustrated in the next Table.

National Culture	Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 MIS 7	
Large Power Distance MIS 14	MIS 14 Centralization Dependence Perceived Control	MIS 7 Perceived Control Centralization Dependence	: : : : :

Table 6.9.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 1)

### The Prototype Model Cell (3, 2)

Within the improved model cell (column 3, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and Performance Gap 3 (MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18, MIS 7, MIS 8, and MIS 9) as illustrated in the following Table (6.10):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> MIS 7, MIS 8, MIS 9
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 2)

**Table 6.10 The Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes MIS 16, MIS 17 and MIS 18 on pages 169-171 and followed by codes MIS 7, MIS 8 and finally MIS 9 on pages 181-183

### Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 2)

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the third gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the performance service quality gap (Gap 3). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 17 on one hand with MIS 8 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (3, 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> MIS 8
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 17	<b>MIS 17</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	<b>MIS 8</b> Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty strong Need for Rules

**Table 6.10.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

### The Improved Model Cell (3, 3)

Taking into account all codes of collectivism and third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3), the examination of these six codes (MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21, MIS 7, MIS 8, and MIS 9) represents the improved model cell number (3, 3) as illustrated in the following Table (6.11).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> MIS7, MIS 8, MIS 9
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21		<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 3)

**Table 6.11 The Improved Model Cell (3, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how collectivism dimension can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms.



**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 3)**

By examining collectivism and performance service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between collectivism and performance gap (Gap 3). This relation can be fully explained by linking MIS 21 on one hand with MIS 9 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (3, 3) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 11.1).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 MIS 9	
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 21	<b>MIS 21</b> Management is management of group Employer-employee relation is moral Hiring & Promotion decisions take employee’s ingroup Personal relationship prevails over task  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System	<b>MIS 9</b> Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system  Management is management of group Employer-employee relation is moral Hiring & Promotion decisions take employee’s ingroup Personal relationship prevails over task

**Table 6.11.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 3)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of short- term orientation and the third service quality (Performance Gap 3), the examination of these six codes (MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24, MIS 7, MIS 8, and MIS 9) represents the improved model cell number (3, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.12).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 MIS 7, MIS 8, MIS 9
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (3,4)

**Table 6.12 The Improved Model Cell (3, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how short-term orientation dimension can affect the performance gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes MIS 22, MIS 23 and MIS 24 on pages 174-175 and followed by codes MIS 7, MIS 8 and finally MIS 9 on pages 181-183

**Findings for Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

The examination of short-term orientation and third service quality gap (Performance Gap3) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between short-term orientation and performance service quality gap (Gap 3). Short-term Orientation codes (MIS 22, MIS 23, and MIS 24) are classified into one category, which called “*Quick*

*Results or Achievements*” that cannot fully explain the performance service quality gap. In other words, *quick Results* dimension cannot empirically explain why MIS member’s performance is always dominated by relations and group related criteria. In this case, the short-term orientation within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

<b>Service Quality</b> National Culture	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> MIS 7, MIS 8, MIS 9
<b>Short-Term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.12.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (3, 4)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

Taking into account all codes of power distance dimension and the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4), the examination of these six codes (MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15, MIS 10, MIS 11, and MIS 12) represents the improved model cell number (column 4, row 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.13).

<b>Service Quality</b> National Culture	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (4, 1)

**Table 6.13 The Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how power distance can affect the last service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with code MIS 10. According to this code, the MIS financial manager said that:

1. *“in our department, we deal with a lot of returned bills that guest refuses to pay before correction”*
2. *“this happens simply because the prices on hotel advertising often differ to what actually should be paid when the service is delivered”*
3. *“to solve this problem, hotel marketing people, front desk, and food & beverage should pay more attention to working in a cooperative way”*

Expressions such as *in our department, we deal with a lot of returned bills that guest refuses to pay before correction, this happens simply because the prices on hotel advertising often differ to what actually should actually be paid when the service is delivered, to solve this problem, hotel marketing people, front desk, and food & beverage should pay more attention to working in a cooperative way* can be classified into one category of communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117). This category is:

1. **Horizontal communication**

In fact this category refers to the inadequate horizontal communications across the MIS hotel functions or departments. It also refers to the different procedures across these departments and the close and one way communication channels among the MIS hotel functions and departments.



The MIS 10 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

Moving to the MIS 11 code, the MIS cleaner lady said that:

1. *“on many days, we, the cleaners, find guests still eating their breakfasts in their rooms having ordered a room breakfast, but we often do not have any note or message from the reception or room service division about cleaning such rooms later and to let guest finish their breakfast”*

Expressions such as *on many days, we, the cleaners, find guests still eating their breakfasts in their rooms having ordered a room breakfast, but we often do not have any note or message from the reception or room service division about cleaning such rooms later and to let guest finish their breakfast* can be classified into one category of communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117). This category is called as:

1. **Horizontal Communication**

Similar to MIS10 code, this category refers to the insufficient horizontal communications across the MIS hotel departments. It also refers to the different procedures across these departments and the close and one way communication channels among the MIS hotel functions and departments.

MIS 11 → **Horizontal Communications**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

The MIS 10 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

According to MIS 12 code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. *“creating or designing a new hotel advertising should reflect what actually is delivered for guests”*
2. *“but no responsibility about what is actually happens in the service encounters*
3. *“if hotel guests see our advertising showing our hotel swimming pool with opening hours of 8:00 am-7:00 pm, and at the same time, the guests actually find that the pool is closed at 5:00 pm, so it is not our department's problem it is the Health Club and Spa department's problem”*
4. *“to solve this problem, the health club and Spa department should formally inform us why they close the pool at 5:00 pm and not 7:00 pm”*

Expressions such as *creating or designing a new hotel advertising should reflect what actually is delivered for guests, but no responsibility about what is actually happens in the service encounters, if hotel guests see our advertising showing our hotel swimming pool with opening hours of 8:00 am-7:00 pm, and at the same time, the guests actually find that the pool is closed at 5:00 pm, so it is not our department's problem it is the Health Club & Spa department's problem, to solve the problem, the health club & Spa department should formally inform us why they close the pool at 5:00 pm and not 7:00 pm* can be classified into one category of service quality communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117). This category is called as:

1. **Horizontal Communication**

In fact this service quality category refers to the inadequate horizontal communications across the MIS hotel functions or departments.

MIS 12 → **Horizontal communication**  
(Zeithaml *et al.*1990, p. 117)

Also, according to this code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. “*but in many cases, it is uncertain to completely predict, control and direct what actually happens*”
2. “*following the hotel rules our department is responsible for advertising*”

Expressions such as *but in many cases, it is uncertain to completely predict, control and direct what actually happens, following the hotel rules our department is responsible for advertising* can be classified into two categories of strong uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125). These two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (strong)**
2. **Need for Rules**



(Hofstede 1991, p. 125)

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

The examination of large power distance and fourth service quality gap (Communication Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between large power distance and communications gap (Gap 4). Large power distance codes (MIS 13, MIS 14, and MIS 15) are classified into three categories, which called inequality of power, hierarchy, dependence and centralization that cannot fully, explains the communications service quality gap.

In other words, power distance dimension cannot directly explain why MIS hotel communications are inadequate across the hotel functions and departments. In this case, the large power distance within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the communication service quality gap (Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS12
<b>Large Power Distance</b> MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.13.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 2)**

Within the Improved model cell (column 4, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and service quality Gap 4 (MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18, MIS 10, MIS 11, and MIS 12) as illustrated in the following Table (6.14):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS11, MIS 12
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS, 16, MIS 17, MIS 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (4,2)

**Table 6.14 The Improved Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the fourth service quality gap (Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. The examination started

with code MIS 16, MIS 17 and MIS 18 on pages 169-171 and followed by codes MIS 10, MIS 11 and finally MIS 12 on pages 186-188.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the fourth gap (Gap 4) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between strong uncertainty avoidance and the fourth service quality gap (Gap 4). This relation can be fully explained by linking code MIS 18 on one hand with MIS 12 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (4, 2).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 12	
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b> MIS 18	<b>MIS 18</b> Uncertainty strong Need for Rules	<b>MIS 12</b> Horizontal Communication.
	Horizontal Communication	Uncertainty strong Need for Rules

**Table 6.14.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 4, row 3), the examination involves the codes of collectivism dimension and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) (MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21, MIS 10, MIS 11, and MIS 12) as illustrated in the following Table (6.15):

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,3)

**Table 6.15 The Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how collectivism can affect the communications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes MIS 19, MIS 20 and MIS 21 on pages 172-173 and followed by codes MIS 10, MIS 11 and finally MIS 12 on pages 186-188.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of collectivism and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between collectivism and communications service quality gap (Gap 4). Collectivism codes (MIS19, MIS 20, and MIS 21) are classified into four categories, which called management is management of group, employer-employee relationship is moral, hiring & promotion decisions take ingroup into account, and relationships prevails over task that cannot fully, explains the fourth service quality gap. In other words, collectivism dimension cannot directly explain why MIS hotel communications among hotel departments or functions are inadequate and formal. In this case, the collectivism within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Collectivism</b> MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.15.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of short-term orientation and the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4), the examination of these six codes (MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24, MIS 10, MIS 11, and MIS 12) represents the last improved model cell (4, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.16).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Short-term Orientation</b> MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,4)

**Table 6.16 The Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how short-term orientation dimension can affect the communication gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes MIS 22, MIS 23 and MIS 24 on pages 1174-175 and followed by codes MIS 10, MIS 11 and finally MIS 12 on pages 1186-188.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of short-term orientation and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between short-term orientation and communications service quality gap (Gap 4). Short-term orientation codes (MIS 22, MIS 23, and MIS 24) are classified into one category, which called “*Quick Results or Achievements*” that cannot empirically explains the communications service quality gap. In other words, *Short-term orientation* dimension cannot empirically explain why MIS hotel departments inadequately communicate and in formal matters. In this case, the Short-term orientation dimension within the MIS hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over this gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Short-term Orientation</b> MIS22, MIS 23, MIS 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.16.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

In Figure 6.1, the national culture – service quality relations within the MIS hotel are summarized.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b>		<b>Specifications Gap 2</b>		<b>Performance Gap 3</b>		<b>Communications Gap 4</b>	
	MIS 1, MIS 2, MIS 3		MIS 4, MIS 5, MIS 6		MIS 7, MIS 8, MIS 9		MIS 10, MIS 11, MIS 12	
<b>National Culture</b>								
<b>Large Power Distance</b>  MIS 13, MIS 14, MIS 15	MIS 13 Inequality of power Hierarchy  Management levels	MIS 1 Management levels  Inequality of Power Hierarchy	?		MIS 14 Centralization Dependence  Perceived Control	MIS 7 Perceived Control  Centralization Dependence	?	
<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</b>  MIS 16, MIS 17, MIS 18	MIS 18 Uncertainty Need for Rules  Upward Communications	MIS 2, MIS 3 Upward Communication  Uncertainty Need for Rules	MIS 16 Uncertainty What is different is dangerous  Management Commitment Goal setting	MIS 4 Management Commitment Goal setting  Uncertainty what is different is dangerous	MIS 17 Uncertainty Need for Rules  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	MIS 8 Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty Need for Rules	MIS 18 Uncertainty Need for Rules  Horizontal Communication	MIS 12 Horizontal Communication  Uncertainty Need for Rules
<b>Collectivism</b>  MIS 19, MIS 20, MIS 21	?		?		MIS 21 Relation is moral Hiring&Promotion Management of Group Relation over Task  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System	MIS 9 Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control System  Relation is moral Hiring& Promotion Management of Group Relation over Task	?	
<b>Short-term Orientation</b>  MIS 22, MIS 23, MIS 24	?		MIS 24 Quick Results or achievement  Management Commitment Goal Setting	MIS 4 Management Commitment Goal Setting  Quick Results or achievement	?		?	

Figure 6.1 The Second Egyptian Hotel (MIS) Case Study Summary

### 6.2.5 Finding and Conceptualizing the Mechanisms within the MIS Case

There are six mechanisms in the improved model (M1) that can be emphasized from the empirical investigation on the second Egyptian hotel (MIS) case study (see Figure 6.2). Comparing with the first Egyptian hotel case study (EG), one can see that the second Egyptian hotel (MIS) investigation emphasizes the same six mechanisms that were found in the first Egyptian hotel. Further, the MIS case study did not reveal any new mechanisms that can be taken into account within the improved model (M1) of national culture - service quality relations. Based on all the empirical examples of the MIS hotel case study, it is reasonable to summarize these six mechanisms as follows:

**Cell 1.1 Hierarchical- Driven Information Gathering and Sharing:** this mechanism explains the effects of large power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**Cell 1.2 and Cell 4.2 Close and Formal Driven Communication:** this mechanism explains the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the first and fourth service quality gaps (Information Gap 1 and Communication Gap 4).

**Cell 2.2 and Cell 2.4 Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism explains the effects of both strong uncertainty avoidance and short term orientation on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**Cell 3.1 Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control:** this mechanism explains the effects of large power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**Cell 3.2 System Border-Driven Performing:** this mechanism explains the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**Cell 3.3 Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships:** this mechanism explains the effects of collectivism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

In the next Figure (6. 2), the mechanisms within the MIS hotel case are summarized and presented.

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
Large Power Distance	Hierarchical Driven Information Gathering and Sharing.	?	Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control	?
Strong Uncertainty Avoidance	Close and Formal Driven Communication	Money Driven Specifying Service Quality	System Border Driven Performing	Close and Formal Driven Communication
Collectivism	?	?	Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships	?
Short-term Orientation	?	Money Driven Specifying Service Quality	?	?

Figure 6.2 The Mechanisms within the MIS Hotel Case Study

To conclude, the repeated emphasis on the earlier six mechanisms within the second Egyptian hotel (MIS) case study helps to internally validate these mechanisms within the improved model (M1). Nevertheless, a final Dutch hotel case study is needed to conclude a final research model of national culture - service quality relations. Further, the second Dutch hotel



case study is also needed to develop the overall research conclusions. The next section discusses the second Dutch hotel (NED) case study.

### 6.3 The Second Dutch Hotel (NED) Case Study

#### 6.3.1 Introduction

As with the earlier hotel case studies, the second Dutch hotel's name is kept confidential and referred to as the NED hotel. The case description starts with an overview of the hotel followed by an extensive description of the two studied elements: service quality behaviors and practices for all the four internal service quality gaps (information gap, specifications gap, performance gap, and communications gap) and national culture values and beliefs in terms of the four national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and long-/short-term orientation). In presenting these two studied elements, the research approach aims to show significant empirical "Examples" of each element.

Again, the first meeting with the general manager was planned as a brief introduction to the research and its aims. Following this, thirteen interviews were conducted with: the general manager (as an interviewee), the accounting & financial manager, the marketing & sales manager, the human resource manager, the reception & reservation manager, the food & beverage manager, the housekeeping manager, three frontline service employees from different hotel departments: one from hotel reception, one from housekeeping and one from the hotel restaurant, and finally three senior supervisors from the same departments. In addition, empirical observations covered three hotel areas: the hotel reception, the restaurant and some hotel rooms. Finally, various NED formal documents were also collected and two hotel guest meetings were conducted. As before, the NED Examples are openly coded as (NED 1, NED 2, NED 3 .... NED 24). The NED1 code refers to the first example of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1). The NED 2 code refers to the second example of the first service quality gap, and, finally, the NED 24 code refers to the third example of the last cultural dimension labeled long-term orientation.

#### 6.3.2 Service Quality Gaps

- **Service Quality Gap 1**

**Example (NED 1):** The NED marketing & sales manager said "*the hotel management always looks to build long-term guest relationships, and this kind of relationship is seen, by the top managers and also the servicing staff, as a long-term gain and benefit for the hotel*". He also, said that "*conducting extensive marketing research and studies plays a critical role in building such long-term relationships and benefits with hotel guests*".

**Example (NED 1) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Marketing research orientation:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conducting regular marketing research.</li><li>Vast amount of first-hand guest information is generalized.</li></ul></li></ul> |
|--|

**Example (NED 2):** The NED general manager stated "*there are not many managerial lines between the top managers and serving employees, and these flat lines only reflect that everyone is the same but with different/unequal roles or tasks. For instance, if the kitchen chef directly speaks to me, I will never say to him please speak first to the food & beverage*

manager”. Finally he said that “*sometimes the kitchen chef knows more than me and sometimes this is not the case; the main point is that guest information is functionally shared and used in order to maximize its benefits*”.

**Example (NED 2) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53)

- **Management levels:**
  - Flat structure for guest information flows.
  - Few management levels to facilitate guest information and feedback.

**Example (NED 3):** The NED general manager said that “*within the NED hotel, there are comprehensive guest-expectation studies. The hotel has developed a comprehensive programme for measuring the expectations of hotel guests in order to build long-term relationships with them*”. He continued by saying that “*the information resulting from this programme is directly sent, communicated and shared with all hotel divisions and staff members who need it, and certainly there is huge feedback*”. He also added “*it is normal to work with some routines for communicating this guest information but these routines are not seen as formal rules that must be followed*”. Finally he concluded by saying that “*with these open and informal communication routines, the top managers can easily predict increasing expectations and be certain about the last updates of these expectations*”.

**Example (NED 3) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

- **Marketing research orientation:**
  - Conducting a regular marketing research.
  - Vast amount of first-hand guest information is generalized.
- **Upward communication:**
  - Informalization to generate, communicate and share guest information.

- **Service Quality Gap 2**

**Example (NED 4):** The NED general manager commented, “*setting service quality specifications and standards that precisely satisfy hotel guests is a challenging process in which everyone should participate*”. He repeated the message in other words “*the top managers, the senior supervisors and the serving employees are all interdependent and equal in this process. We cannot set a standard and then ask people on the frontline to achieve or commit without a primary contribution from those people*”. Finally, he said “*all the hotel staff members commit to one goal -guest satisfaction- and sustaining this satisfaction in the long term*”.

**Example (NED 4) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel guests' expectations, needs and satisfaction.
- **Standardizations:**  
Service quality standards emphasize satisfying guests' expectations and needs as the main strategic/ long-term goal.
- **Goal setting:**  
Participation in setting service quality standards.  
Service quality strategy is built on mutual internal and external experiences.  
Service quality goals are strategic and have a long-term orientation.

**Example (NED 5):** The NED marketing & sales manager answered by “*if I find that one of hotel guests is not completely satisfied, this is normal and an accepted risk simply because all the service specifications and standards will be innovatively updated based on guest comments and requests*”. Finally, he concluded by saying that “*I am sure that the next time, this displeased guest will be satisfied and, if not, the hotel management will do the same “updating of standards”*”.

**Example (NED 5) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel guests' expectations, needs and satisfaction.  
Service quality strategy depends on “*guest orientation*”.
- **Standardizations:**  
Service quality standards emphasize satisfying guests' expectations and needs as the main strategic goal.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking outside- in for setting service quality standards.  
Service quality goals are strategic and have long-term orientation.

**Example (NED 6):** The marketing & sales manager stated that “*our strategic goal is ‘guest satisfaction’ and in order to attain this goal, hotel guests’ expectations should be always exceeded and dealt with in an innovative way*”.

**Example (NED 6) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73)

- **Management commitment to service quality:**  
Management commitment is to hotel guests' expectations, needs and satisfaction.  
Service quality strategy depends on “*guest orientation*”.
- **Standardizations:**  
Service quality standards emphasize satisfying guests' expectations and needs as the main strategic goal.
- **Goal setting:**  
Thinking outside- in for setting service quality standards.  
Service quality goals are strategic and have long-term orientation.

- **Service Quality Gap 3**

**Example (NED 7):** A restaurant waiter said “*If a hotel guest does not like a dish, I can directly change it, simply because I serve flexibly rather than depending on the restaurant captain as my supervisor*”. The waiter added “*servicing and satisfying hotel guests needs the degree of decentralization and empowerment that already exists between the restaurant waiters and the captain*”.

**Example (NED 7) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Perceived control:**  
Decentralization and empowerment to serve hotel guests.  
Indirect control.

**Example (NED 8):** A receptionist stated, “*at this hotel, the human resource department always recruits qualified staff and employees, and then gives them training programmes that teach them how to innovatively perform to exceed guests’ expectations. In doing so, I, as a receptionist, perform my job towards the guests, but this also means towards the hotel management*”. The receptionist added that “*hotel rules are important but they are certainly not enough, simply because a lot of questions and requests coming from guests are unexpected and in such a situation service employee should perform in an innovative way not follow the hotel rules*”.

**Example (NED 8) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

- **Role conflict:**  
Little job conflict.
- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection of employees depends on task and job that should be achieved, objective job descriptions.
- **Supervisory control system**
- **Perceived control:**  
Decentralization and empowerment to serve hotel guests.  
Indirect control.

**Example (NED 9):** A cleaner said that “*as I am here in this hotel to perform a very clear and specific task, it is quite reasonable to be paid more if I do my job well or vice versa*”. She concluded by saying that “*the hotel management takes into account every performance in all promotion and performance appraisal processes, so performing well with hotel guests means also performing well with the hotel management*”.

**Example (NED 9) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.92-93)

- **Employee-job fit:**  
Selection of employees related to task and job that should be achieved  
Objective job descriptions.
- **Supervisory control system**

- **Service Quality Gap 4**

**Example (NED 10):** The marketing & sales manager said that “*the final hotel’s advertising is the outcome of hotel departments’ cooperation. In order to design and create successful advertising, a lot of departments need to contribute to it*”

**Example (NED 10) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication**  
Extensive horizontal communication between functions and departments.  
Internal and external marketing.

**Example (NED 11):** A cleaner said that “*it is logical to cooperate with other people in other departments such as people in reception, the health club and Spa*”.

**Example (NED 11) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication**  
Extensive horizontal communications between hotel departments and functions.

**Example (NED 12):** According to the general manager, “*the hotel is considered as a system, so it is common sense among hotel departments and functions to work in a cooperative way to communicate what guests will receive when they come and stay in the hotel*”

**Example (NED 12) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of the Extended Gaps Model; Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.117)

- **Horizontal communication**  
Extensive horizontal communication between functions/departments  
Internal and external marketing.

### 6.3.3 National Culture Dimensions

- **Power Distance**

**Example (NED 13):** A receptionist said that “*when the hotel management wanted change the old room reservation program, the front-office manager consulted us as receptionists. Further, I have participated in setting up the new room reservation program*”. Finally, he concluded that “*at this hotel, subordinates and their bosses are working in flat relationship on unequal tasks*”.

**Example (NED 13) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Interdependence:**  
Interdependence is exists between subordinates and bosses.
- **Hierarchy of tasks (flat relation)**  
Hierarchy means inequality of roles.
- **Subordinates expected to be consulted.**  
Participatory leadership style.

**Example (NED 14):** A cleaning lady at NED hotel said that “*disagreements with the direct supervisor or boss is acceptable. As I perform and control service encounters with the hotel*”

guests, I have autonomy in the decision to offer the guests what they ask". She continued by saying that "of course the boss has to decide, but not in all cases".

**Example (NED 14) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.37)

- **Interdependence:**  
Interdependence exists between subordinates and bosses.  
Subordinates expected to be consulted.
- **Decentralization**  
Supervisors/bosses do not always decide and order.  
Decentralization is popular.

**Example (NED 15):** The NED general manager said that "*hierarchical levels between bosses and subordinates do not exist in this hotel, if there is inequality, it is in the roles/tasks which hotel members perform*". Giving an example, the NED general manager stated "*the hotel's flat structure has to show which functional roles are carried out within this organization and who accomplishes these roles. Hotel managers at the top need people on the floor, and vice versa, based on the functions that people have*".

**Example (NED 15) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

- **Equality of power :**  
Inequality of power should be minimized.
- **Hierarchy of tasks (flat relation)**  
Hierarchy means inequality of roles.
- **Interdependence:**  
Interdependent is existed between subordinates and bosses.

- **Uncertainty Avoidance**

**Example (NED 16):** A hotel receptionist stated "*servicing the hotel guest in an innovative way is considered as one of the hotel's goals or targets and the hotel management taught me this on the first day I came here*". The receptionist added "*at the reception desk of a hotel with more than 200 rooms such as here, a lot of unexpected problems occur or happen. So to fully satisfy guests with these problems, I deal with such problems as challenges that should be accepted and ingeniously dealt with*". Finally he concluded by saying that "*if the hotel management is committed to innovative services, I should follow the same track*".

**Example (NED 16) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (high):**  
There is an innovative and emotional need to control the environment.

**Example (NED 17):** A cleaner at the hotel stated that "*in the housekeeping department, hotel cleaners emphasise innovative cleaning performance to always satisfy hotel guests. For instance, I do not need a hotel rule telling me that the clean bed covers should be rotated among hotel rooms with long stays, these covers have different colors and so every day, the*

guest can see a new color on his/her bed". The cleaner continued, "I never know what exactly the guests will ask me when I clean their rooms, but I should certainly satisfy any unexpected requests. The hotel management shares this view as: "within unexpected service situations; do something good for guest, this is better than saying I do not know".

**Example (NED 17) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Less emotional need for rules:**  
There are a lot of problems that can be solved without formal rules.
- **Tolerance of innovation idea (high):**  
There is an innovative and emotional need to control the environment.

**Example (NED 18):** The NED general manager said "*certainly when serving a huge number of guests at big hotels like ours, there should be no more rules and regulations. Further, informally communicating guests expectations or enormous needs is one of the successful ways of dealing with a large number of unexpected situations with hotel guests*".

**Example (NED 18) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.125)

- **Uncertainty (weak):**  
Uncertainty is a normal feature and is accepted as it comes.  
High acceptance of ambiguous situations.
- **Less emotional need for rules:**  
There are a lot of problems that can be solved without formal rules.  
Not following a formal structure.

- **Individualism/Collectivism**

**Example (NED 19)** The NED human resources manager stated, "*as part of the hotel management, I always act in the hiring and selection processes. As the human resource manager, I match the new applicant's qualifications to the task specifications that he/she will perform and accomplish*". According to the human resources manager, "*every new applicant is special and an individual case who is different to the others. In other words, every person has different skills and talents that may/may not match the hotel job/task*".

**Example (NED 19) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from any group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their own needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage.**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions are be based on skills.**
- **Task prevails over personnel relationships.**

**Example (NED 20)** A cleaning lady stated that "*the management does not hesitate to promote and reward serving employees who perform well and always make guests satisfied and happy*". She continued and said that "*at this hotel, there is a good chance to show my own skills that not everyone will have, and I like that when I deal with guests and perform my job*".

**Example (NED 20) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p.67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from the group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their own needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage.**
- **Hiring and promotion decisions are based on skills.**
- **Task prevails over personnel relationships.**

**Example (NED 21):** A restaurant waiter said “*in my view, I see the NED hotel as a collection of creative people, or individuals, who independently maximize their own outcome but also in sum they maximize the NED hotel outcomes*”.

**Example (NED 21) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 67)

- **Management is management of individuals:**  
Independence from the group.  
Hotel members are individuals with their own needs.
- **Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage.**
- **Task prevails over personnel relationships.**

- **Long-/Short-Term Orientation**

**Example (NED 22):** The hotel's human resources manager said “*I would like to work for NED in the future simply, because at the NED, building long-term relationships with both hotel guests and hotel staff members is considered as a long-term investment*”. He continued “*just as the hotel management conducts marketing & sales research to help build such long-term relationships with guests, the hotel management also conducts a lot amount of internal research concerning the employees' satisfaction and career development*”.

**Example (NED 22) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**  
Long-term benefits are long-term achievement.  
Willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose.  
Concern with respecting the demands of Virtue.  
Future-orientation.

**Example (NED 23):** A receptionist at the NED hotel said that “*for me, working here is considered as a long-term self investment in my career and my future*”.

**Example (NED 22) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede's Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**  
Long-term benefits are long-term achievement.  
Willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose.  
Concern with respecting the demands of Virtue.  
Future-orientation.



**Example (NED 24):** In the words of cleaner “*I have a mutually beneficial relationship with this hotel, so I want to stay and work here in the future*”.

**Example (NED 24) key issues:**

(Coded in terms of Hofstede’s Culture Model; Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

- **Long-term results:**
  - Long-term benefits are long-term achievement.
  - Concern with respecting the demands of Virtue.
  - Future-orientation.

**6.3.4 National Culture - Service Quality Relations within the NED Hotel Case**

By using the two streams of empirical *Examples* (on service quality gaps and cultural dimensions), the found mechanisms can be presented, partly in this section and more fully in the next section (Section 6.3.5) to finalize the improved model scheme. In doing this, two coding procedures are followed: Firstly, in this section, the twenty-four examples from NED hotel case study are coded in terms of both the Extended Gaps Model of service quality and Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture. Secondly, in the next section the empirical “*Examples*” that have been coded will be analysed in order to find the mechanisms that link them. In carrying out these two coding procedures, the axial and selective coding techniques as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) are employed.

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 1)**

Starting with power distance dimension and first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) codes (NED 13, NED 14, NED 15, NED 1, NED 2, and NED 3), these six codes can refer to the improved model cell number 1, 1 (column 1, row 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.17). Examining each of these codes means understanding what the interviewee answered, said and how he/she interpreting certain events, acts and outcomes. Accordingly, examining these six examples enables one to explain how power distance dimension affects the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) within the NED hotel case and by which mechanisms:

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">National Culture</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Service Quality</span> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Information Gap 1</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">NED 1, NED 2, NED 3</span> </div>
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Small Power Distance</span> <span style="font-weight: bold;">Model Cell</span> </div> <p>NED 13, NED 14, NED 15 (1,1)</p>	

**Table 6.17 The First Cell in the Improved Model (1, 1)**

At the beginning, the examination and analysis start with the NED 13 code. According to this code, a receptionist at NED hotel said:

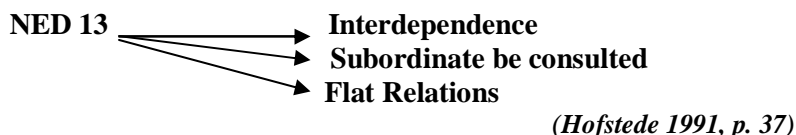
1. “*when the hotel management wanted change the old room reservation program, the front office manager consulted us as receptionists*”
2. “*I have participated in setting up the new room reservation program*”
3. “*subordinates and their bosses are working in flat relationship and unequal tasks*”

Expressions such as *when the hotel management wanted change the old room reservation program, the front office manager consulted us as receptionists, I have participated in setting up the new room reservation program, subordinates and their bosses are working in flat relationship and unequal tasks* can be classified into three categories of small power

distance based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37). These three categories are:

1. **Interdependence**
2. **Subordinates should be consulted**
3. **Flat Relations**

These two categories refer to the small power distance within the NED hotel case. Small power distance means small status difference between supervisors/bosses and their subordinates within the NED hotel case. It also means that subordinates and their supervisors/bosses are interdependence, and they expected (subordinates) to be consulted.



According to the NED 13, the above expressions such as *when the hotel management wanted change the old room reservation program, the front office manager consulted us as receptionists, I have participated in setting up the new room reservation program, at the NED, subordinates & their bosses are working in flat relationship and unequal tasks* can be classified into two categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.73), these two categories are:

1. **Standardization**
2. **Goal Setting**



According to code NED 14, a cleaner said that:

1. *“disagreements with the direct supervisor or boss is acceptable”*
2. *“as I perform and control the service encounters with the hotel guests”*
3. *“I have autonomy in the decision to offer the guests what they ask”*
4. *“of course the boss has to decide but not in all cases”*

Expressions such as *disagreements with the direct supervisor or boss is acceptable, As I perform and control the service encounters with the hotel guests, I have autonomy in the decision to offer the guest what they ask, of course the boss has to decide but not in all cases* can be classified into two categories of small power distance based on Hofstede's Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37). These two categories are:

1. **Decentralization**
2. **Interdependence**

These two categories refer to the small power distance within the NED case. Small power distance means small status difference between supervisors/bosses and their subordinates within the NED hotel case. It also means that subordinates and their bosses are interdependence. Finally, small power distance means decentralization in terms of supervisors/bosses not always decide and order.



Also, according to the NED 14 code, the NED cleaning lady said:

1. *“as I perform and control the service encounters with the hotel guest*
2. *“I have autonomy”*
3. *“ in the decision to offer the guests what they ask”*

Expressions such as *as I perform and control the service encounter with the hotel guests, I have autonomy in the decision to offer the guest what they ask*” can be classified in to one category of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, pp. 92-93), this category is:

1. ***Perceived Control***

NED 14 → **Perceived Control**  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

In line with code NED 15, the general manager said:

1. “*hierarchical levels between bosses and subordinates are not exist in this hotel*”
2. “*if there is inequality, it will be in the roles/tasks which hotel staff members perform*”
3. “*hotel managers at the top need people on the floor and vice versa based on the functions that people have*”

Expressions such as *the hieratical levels between bosses and subordinates are not exist in this hotel, if there is inequality, it will be in the roles/tasks which hotel staff members perform, hotel managers at the top need people on the floor and vice versa based on the functions that people have* can be classified into two categories of small power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model (Hofstede 1991, p. 37), these two categories are:

1. ***Equality of Power***
2. ***Hierarchy of Roles (Flat Relations)***

Small power distance means that inequality among NED hotel members should be minimized. Small power distance also means small status difference between the boss and subordinates within the NED hotel case. It also means that subordinates and supervisors/bosses are interdependence, and they (subordinates) expected to be told consulted. Finally small power distance means hierarchy of roles not people. In other terms, the relations among NED hotel members are flat.

NED 15 → **Equality of Power**  
→ **Hierarchy of Roles (flat relations)**  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

Also, according to the NED 15 code, the general manager said:

1. “*the hotel’s flat structure has to show which functional roles are carried out within this organization and who accomplish these roles*”

Expressions such as *the hotel’s flat structure has to show which functional roles are carried out within this organization and who accomplish these roles* can be classified in to one category of service quality information gap (Gap 1) using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. ***Management Levels***

NED 15 → **Management Levels**  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

Moving to the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) codes, according to the NED 1 code, the NED marketing & sales manager said:

1. “*conducting extensive marketing research and studies plays a critical role in building such long-term relationships and benefits with hotel guests*”

Expressions such as *conducting extensive marketing research and studies plays a critical role in building such long-term relationships and benefits with hotel guests* can be classified into two categories of the service quality information gap using the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. ***Marketing Research***

NED 1 —————> Marketing Research

(Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 53)

Also, according to the NED 1 code, the marketing & sales manager said:

1. *“the hotel management always looks to build long run guest relationships”*
2. *“this kind of relationships is seen, from the top managers and also the servicing staff, as a long-term gain and benefit for the hotel”*

Expressions such as *the hotel management always looks to build long run guest relationships, this kind of relationships is seen, from the top managers and also the servicing staff, as a long-term gain and benefit for the hotel* can be classified into one category of long term orientation based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

1. **Long-term Results**

NED 1 —————> Long-term Results

(Hofstede 1991, p.173)

According to the NED 2 code, the NED general manager said:

1. *“there are not many managerial lines between top managers and serving employees”*
2. *“also these flat lines only refer to that everyone is the same but with different/unequal roles or tasks”*

Expressions such as *there are not many managerial lines between top managers and serving employees, also these flat lines only refer to that everyone is the same but with different/unequal roles or tasks* can be classified into one category of service quality information gap (Gap 1) based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p.53), this category is:

1. **Management Levels**

NED 2 —————> Management Levels

(Zeithaml et al. 1990, p.53)

Also, according to the NED 2, the general manager said:

1. *“if the kitchen chef directly speak with me, I will never say to him please speak first to the food & beverage manager”*
2. *“sometimes the kitchen chef knows more than me and this is not the case, the main point is that guest information is functionally shared and used in orders to maximize its benefits”*

Expressions such as *if the kitchen chef directly speak with me, I will never say to him please speak first to the food & beverage manager. sometimes the kitchen chef knows more than me and this is not the case, the main point is that guest information is functionally shared and used in orders to maximize its benefits* can be classified into two categories of small power distance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 37). These two categories are:

1. **Equality of Power**
2. **Hierarchy of Roles (Flat Relations)**

NED 2 —————> Equality of Power  
 NED 2 —————> Hierarchy of roles (Flat Relations)

(Hofstede 1991, p. 37)

Finally, regarding to NED 3, the general manager stated that:

1. *“the information resulting from this programme is directly sent, communicated and shared with all hotel divisions and staff members who need it”*
2. *“certainly there is huge feedback”*
3. *“with these open and informal communication routines”*



<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NED 1, NED 2, NED 3
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 16, NED 17, NED 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,2)

**Table 6.18 The Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

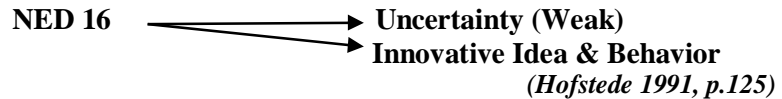
The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with code NED 16. According to this code, a hotel receptionist said:

1. *“a lot of unexpected problems occur or happen”*
2. *“so to fully satisfy guests with these problems”*
3. *“I deal with such problems as challenges”*
4. *“that should be accepted and ingeniously dealt with”*

Expressions such as *a lot of unexpected problems occur or happen, so to fully satisfy guests with these problems, I deal with such problems as challenges that should be accepted and ingeniously dealt with* can be integrated into two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.125). These two categories are:

1. **Uncertainty (Weak)**
2. **Innovative Idea and Behavior**

In this view, the NED staff members believe and consider that uncertainty is a normal feature and it is accepted as it comes. Furthermore, there is a strong emotional need to control the environment and be innovative in ideas and behaviors among the NED hotel members.



Also, according to the NED 16, the receptionist said that:

1. *“serving the hotel guest in innovative way is considered as one of the hotel’s goals or targets”*
2. *“if the hotel management is committed to innovative services, I should follow the same track”*

Expressions such as *serving the hotel guest in innovative way is considered as one of the hotel’s goals or targets, if the hotel management is committed to innovative services, I should follow the same track* can be classified into two category of Specifications Gap 2 and one category of Performance Gap 3 based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73, p. 92-93), these categories are:

1. **Management commitment to service quality**
2. **Goal setting**
3. **Employee- Job Fit**



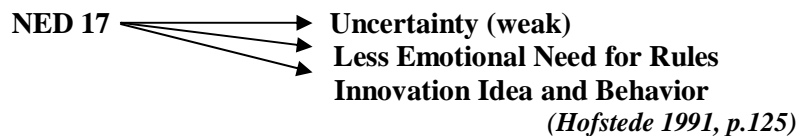
In the view of NED 17 code, a cleaner said:

1. *“hotel cleaners emphasis innovative cleaning performance”*
2. *“I do not need a hotel rule telling me that the clean bed covers should be rotated among hotel rooms with long stays, these covers have different colors and so every*

- day the guest can see new color on his/her bed”*
3. *“I never know what exactly the guests can ask me when I clean their rooms, but I should certainly should satisfy any unexpected requests”*
  4. *“within unexpected service situations do something good for guest, better than saying I do not know”*

Expressions such as *hotel cleaners emphasis innovative cleaning performance, I do not need a hotel rule telling me that the clean bed covers should be rotated among hotel rooms with long stays, these covers have different colors and so every day the guest can see new color on his/her bed, I never know what exactly the guests can ask me when I clean their rooms, but I should certainly should satisfy any unexpected requests. , within unexpected service situations do something good for guest, better than saying I do not know* can be classified into three categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these three categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Weak)*
2. *Less Emotional Need for Rules*
3. *Innovative Idea and Behavior*



Also, according to the NED 17, the cleaner lady said:

1. *“the hotel management shares the same view as: within unexpected service situations; do something good for guest, better than saying I do not know”*

Expressions such *the hotel management shares the same view as :within unexpected service situations; do something good for guest, better than saying I do not know* can be classified into two main categories of performance service quality gap (Gap 3) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, pp. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. *Role Conflict*
2. *Employee- Job Fit*

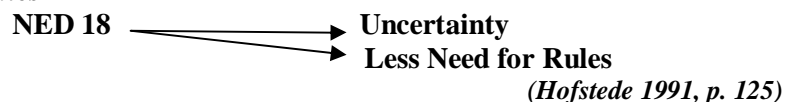


In the view of NED 18 code, the NED general manager said:

1. *“when serving a huge number of guests at big hotels like ours, there should no more rules and regulations”*

Expressions such as *when serving a huge number of guests at big hotels like ours, there should no more rules and regulations* can be classified into only two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (weak)*
2. *Less Need for Rules*



Also, regarding to the NED 18, the general manager said that:

1. *“informally communicating guests’ expectations or enormous needs is one of successful ways of dealing with a large number unexpected situations with hotel guests”*

Expressions such as *informally communicating guests expectations or enormous needs is one of successful ways of dealing with a number of unexpected situations with hotel guests*

can be classified into one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1) based on the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml 1990, p. 53), this category is:

1. *Upward Communications*



**Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the first gap (Information Gap 1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between weak uncertainty avoidance and the first service quality gap. This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED 18 on one hand with NED 3 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (1, 2).

National Culture Service Quality	Information Gap 1 NED 3	
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 18	<b>NED 18</b> Uncertainty (weak) Less need for rules  Upward Communication	<b>NED 3</b> Upward Communication.  Uncertainty (weak) Less need for rules

**Table 6.18.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

Considering all codes of individualism/collectivism and the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), the examination of these codes (NED 19, NED 20, NED 21, NED 1, NED 2, and NED 3) represents the improved model cell number (1, 3) as illustrated in the following Table (6.19).

National Culture Service Quality	Information Gap 1 NED 1, NED 2, NED 3
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (1,3)

**Table 6.19 The Improved Model Cell (1, 3)**

Starting with code NED 19, the human resources manager said that:

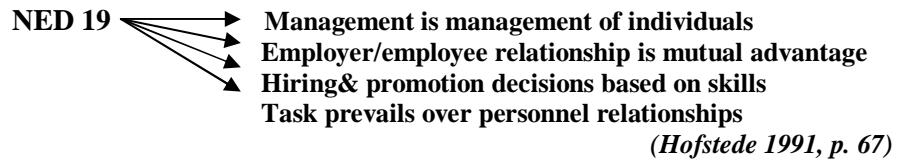
1. *“every new applicant is special and individual case, who is different to the others”*
2. *“in other word, every person has different skills and talents that may/may not match the hotel job/task”*

Expressions such as *every new applicant is special and individual case who is different to the others, every person has different skills and talents that may/may not match the hotel job/task* can be integrated and classified into four categories of individualism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67), these four categories are:

1. *Management is management of individuals*
2. *Employer-employee relationship is based on mutual advantage*
3. *Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on skills*
4. *Task prevails over personnel relationships*



These four categories refer to the individualism values among the NED hotel members. They also mean that NED hotel members highly value their individual task-relationships with each other. Furthermore, the NED hotel members believe and consider that individual should be independent from the group and finally task prevails over personnel relationships.



Also, regarding to the NED 19 code,

1. *“as a part of the hotel management, I always act in the hiring and selection processes, as the human resources manager, I match the new applicant’s qualifications to the specifications that he/she will perform and accomplish”*

Expressions stated above can be also classified into two main categories of performance service quality gap (Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 92-93). These two categories are:

1. **Employee-Job Fit**
2. **Supervisory Control System**

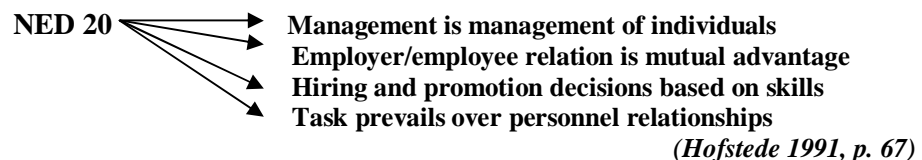


Moving to the NED 20 code, the cleaning lady said that:

1. *“the management does not hesitate to promote and reward individual serving employee who perform well and always make guests satisfied and happy”*
2. *“at this hotel, there is a big chance to show my own sills that not everyone will have and I like that when I deal with guests and perform my job”*

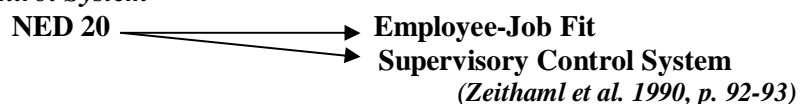
Expressions such as *the management does not hesitate to promote and reward individual serving employee who perform well and always make guests satisfied and happy, at this hotel, there is a big chance to show my own sills that not everyone will have and I like that when I deal with guests and perform my job* can also be classified into four categories of individualism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These four categories refer to the individualism values among the NED hotel case. These categories are:

1. **Management is management of individuals**
2. **Employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage**
3. **Hiring and promotion decisions based on skills**
4. **Task prevails over personnel relationships**



Also regarding to the NED 20 code, expressions stated above can be classified into two main categories of performance service quality gap (Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, pp. 92-93), these two categories are:

1. **Employee-Job Fit**
2. **Supervisory Control System**

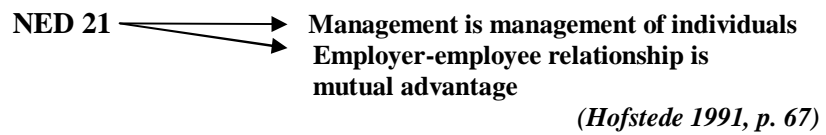


Finally, regarding to the NED 21 code, the NED restaurant waiter said:

1. *“in my view, I see the NED hotel as a collection of creative persons or individuals who independently maximize their own outcome but also in sum they maximize the NED hotel outcomes”*

Expressions such as *in my view, I see the NED hotel as collection of creative persons or individuals who independently maximize their own outcome but also in sum they maximize the NED hotel outcomes* can be classified into two categories of individualism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These four categories are:

1. *Management is management of individuals*
2. *Employer/employee relationship is mutual advantage*



Code NED 21 does not have any assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990)

### Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 3)

The examination of individualism dimension and first service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a relation between individualism dimension and the first service quality gap (Gap 1). In other words, individualism cannot empirically explain why guests’ information is informally conducted, reported and communicated along with a flat structure within the NED hotel. In this case, the individualism within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide direct interpretations over the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NED 1, NED 2, NED 3
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

Table 6.19.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 3)

### The Improved Model Cell (1, 4)

Taking into account all codes of long-/short- term orientation and the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1), the examination of these six codes (NED 22, NED 23, NED 24, NED 1, NED 2, and NED 3) represents the improved model cell number (1, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.20).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NED 1, NED 2, NED 3
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24		<b>Model Cell</b> (1,4)

Table 6 .20 The Improved Model Cell (1, 4)

Regarding to the NED 22 code, The NED human resources manager said:

1. *“I would like to work for NED in the future simply because at the NED, building a long-term relationships with both hotel guests and hotel staff members is considered as a long-term investment”*

Expressions such as *I would like to work for NED in the future simply because at the NED, building a long term relationships with both hotel guest and hotel staff members is considered as a long-term investment* can be integrated into one category of long term orientation dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 173), this category is:

1. **Long-term Results**

This category refers to the long-term orientation among the NED hotel members. It also represents long-term goals or needs that NED members aim to achieve as a clear sigh of their future oriented. Also regarding to this category, the NED hotel’s staff members tend to be concerning with respecting the demands of Virtue.

**NED 22** —————> **Long-term Results**  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

Also, according to the NED 22 code, the human resource manager said:

1. *“just as the hotel management conducts marketing & sales research to help build such long-term relationships with guests, the hotel management also conducts a lot amount of internal research concerning the hotel employees satisfaction and career development”*

Expressions such as *as the hotel management conducts marketing & sales research and studies to help build such long-term relationships with guests, the hotel management also conducts a lot amount of internal research concerning the hotel employees satisfaction and career development* can be classified into one category of the first service quality gap (Information Gap1) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p.53), this category is:

1. **Marketing Research**

**NED 22** —————> **Marketing Research**  
(Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

According to the NED 23 code, the receptionist said that:

1. *“for me, working here is considered as a long-term self investment in my career and my future”*

Expressions such as *for me, working here is considered as a long-term self investment in my career and my future* can be classified into the same category of long-term results. As the NED 22 code, this category refers to the long-term orientation among the NED hotel members.

**NED 23** —————> **Long-term Results**  
(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)

The NED 23 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

Finally, regarding to the NED 24 code, a cleaner lady said that:

1. *“I have a mutually beneficial relationship with this hotel, so I want to stay and work here in the future”*

Expressions such as *I have a mutually beneficial relationship with this hotel, so I want to stay and work here in the future* can also integrated in to the long-term results category.

Regarding to this category, the NED hotel’s members tend to be future oriented not past oriented in their achievements. And finally, NED hotel members are concerning with possessing the Virtue.

**NED 24** —————> **Long-term Results**  
*(Hofstede 1991, p. 173)*

The NED 24 code does not have any assessment or examination based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (1, 4)**

By examining Long-term orientation and the second service quality gap (Information Gap1) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between long-term orientation and service quality information gap (Gap 1). This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED 22 on one hand with NED 1 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (1, 4) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 20.1).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b> NED 1	
<b>National Culture</b>		
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22	<b>NED 22</b> Long-term Results  Marketing Research	<b>NED 1</b> Marketing Research  Long-term Results

**Table 6.20.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (1, 4)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

Taking into account all codes of power distance and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2), the examination of these six codes (NED 13, NED 14, NED 15, NED 4, NED 5, and NED 6) represents the improved model cell number (2, 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.21).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>National Culture</b>	
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NED 13, NED 14, NED 15	<b>Model Cell</b> (2, 1)

**Table 6.21 The Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

Starting with NED 4 code, the general manager said:

1. *“setting service quality specifications and standards that precisely satisfy hotel guests is a challenging process in which everyone should participate”*
2. *“we cannot set a standard and then ask people on the frontline to achieve or commit without a primary contribution from those people”*
3. *“all the hotel staff members commit to one goal -guest satisfaction- and sustaining this satisfaction in the long-term”*

Expressions such as *setting service quality specifications and standards that precisely satisfy hotel guests is a challenging process in which everyone should participate, we cannot set a standard and then ask people on the frontline to achieve or commit without a primary contribution from those people, all the hotel staff members commit to one goal -guest*

*satisfaction- and sustaining this satisfaction in the long-term* can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73). These three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*

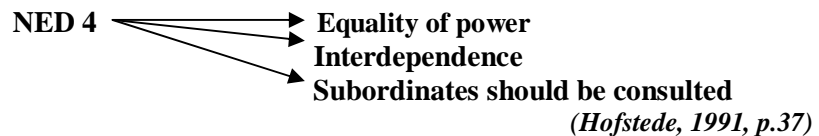
At the NED hotel, management commitment is to the outside goals such as guest satisfaction and attaining guest loyalty. Also, Service quality standardization emphasizes on hotel guest's satisfaction. Finally, service quality goal setting is more strategic towards guest satisfaction.



Also, regarding to NED code 4, the general manager said:

1. *“the top managers, the senior supervisors and the serving employees are all interdependent and equal in this process”*
2. *“we cannot set a standard and then ask people on frontline to achieve or commit without a primary contribution from those people”*

Expressions such as *the top managers, the senior supervisors and the serving employees are all interdependent and equal in this process, we cannot set a standard and then ask people on frontline to achieve or commit without a primary contribution from those people* can be classified into three categories of small power distance based on the Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p.37), these three categories are:



Regarding to the NED 5 code, marketing & sales manager said:

1. *“if I find that one of NED hotel guests is not completely satisfied, this is normal and accepted risk simply because all the service specifications and standards will be innovatively update based on guest comments and requests”*
2. *“I am sure that the next time, this displeased guest will be satisfied and if not we will do the same “updating the standards”*

Expressions such as *if I find that one of NED hotel guests is not completely satisfied, this is normal and accepted risk simply because all the service specifications and standards will be innovatively update based on guest comments and requests, I am sure that the next time, this displeased guest will be satisfied and if not, the hotel management will do the same “updating the standards”* can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*



Also, according to the NED 5 code, the above expressions can be integrated also into two categories of weak uncertainty avoidance based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 125), these two categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (Weak)*
2. *Innovative Idea and Behavior*

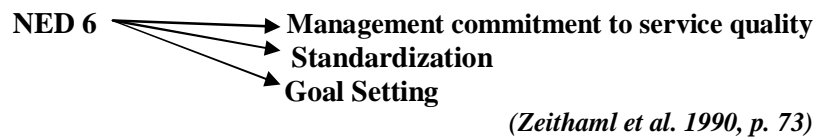


In line with code NED 6, the marketing & manager said that:

1. “*our strategic goal is -guests’ satisfaction- and in order to attain this goal hotel expectations should be always exceeded and dealt with in an innovative way*”

Expressions such as *our strategic goal is -guests’ satisfaction- and in order to attain this goal; hotel expectations should be always exceeded and dealt with in an innovative way* can be classified into three categories of the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml et al. 1990, p. 73), these three categories are:

1. *Management commitment to service quality*
2. *Standardization*
3. *Goal Setting*



The NED 6 code does not have any assessment or examination based on the Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

### Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 1)

By examining power distance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between small power distance and service quality specifications gap (Gap 2). This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED 13 on one hand with NED 4 code on the other hand inside the improved model cell (2, 1) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 21.1).

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b>	
<b>National Culture</b>	<b>NED 4</b>	
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NED 13	<b>NED 13</b> Interdependence Subordinates be consulted	<b>NED 4</b> Standardization Goal Setting
	Standardization Goal Setting	Interdependence Subordinates be consulted

**Table 6.21.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 1)**

### The Improved Model Cell (2, 2)

Within the improved model cell (column 2, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (NED16, NED 17, NED 18, NED 4, NED 5, and NED 6) as illustrated in the following Table (6. 22):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 16, NED 17, NED 18		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,2)

**Table 6.22 The Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code NED 16, NED 17 and NED 18 on pages 206-208 and followed by codes NED 4, NED 5 and finally NED 6 in pages 212-214.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between weak uncertainty avoidance and service quality specifications gap (Gap 2). This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED16 on one hand with NED 5 code on the other hand inside the improved model cell (2, 2) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 22.1).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 5	
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 16		<b>NED 16</b> Uncertainty (weak) Innovative idea and behavior	<b>NED 5</b> Management Commitment Goal Setting
		Management Commitment Goal Setting	Uncertainty (weak) Innovative idea and behavior

**Table 6.22.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

Within the improved model cell (column 2, row 3), the examination involves the codes of Individualism/collectivism dimension and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (NED 19, NED 20, NED 21, NED 4, NED 5, and NED 6) as illustrated in Table 6.23.

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,3)

**Table 6.23 The Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how individualism can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes NED 19, NED 20 and NED 21 on pages 208-210 and followed by codes NED 4, NED 5 and finally NED 6 on pages 212-214.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

The examination of individualism and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between

collectivism and second service quality gap (Gap 2). Individualism codes (NED 19, NED 20, and NED 21) are classified into four categories, which called management is management of individuals, relationship employer-employee is mutual advantage, hiring & promotion decisions based on skills, and task prevails over relationships that cannot fully, explains the second service quality gap. In other words, individualism dimension cannot directly explain why NED hotel management commitment to service quality is based on guest satisfaction. In this case, the individualism within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 5.23.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (2, 3)**

**The Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

Within the improved model cell (column 2, row 4), the examination involves the codes of long-term orientation and second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) (NED 22, NED 23, NED 24, NED 4, NED 5, and NED 6) as illustrated in the following Table (6.24):

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24		<b>Model Cell</b> (2,4)

**Table 6.24 The Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how long-term orientation can affect the Specifications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code NED 22, NED 23 and NED 24 on pages 211-212 and followed by codes NED 4, NED 5 and finally NED 6 on pages 212-214.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (2, 4)**

The examination of long-term orientation and the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between long-term orientation and specifications service quality gap (Gap 2). Long-term orientation codes (NED 22, NED 23, and NED 24) are classified into one category, which called long-term results that cannot fully explain the specifications service quality gap. In this case, the long-term orientation dimension within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Specifications Gap 2</b> NED 4, NED 5, NED 6
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.24.1 Findings for the Prototype Model Cell (2, 4)**

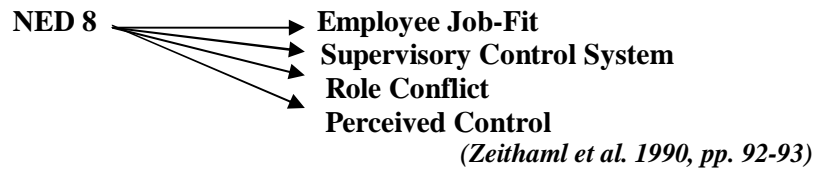




Expressions such as *the human resource department always recruits qualified staff and employees, and then gives them training programmes that teach them how innovatively performs to exceed guests' expectation, I as receptionist, perform my job towards the guests, but this means also towards the hotel management* can be classified into four categories of service quality performance gap (Gap 3) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al. 1990, pp. 92-93). These four categories are:

1. *Employee-Job Fit*
2. *Supervisory Control System*
3. *Role Conflict*
4. *Perceived Control*

These service quality performance's categories refer to the less role conflict in the NED hotel case. They also mean that selection of hotel members belongs to task and job objective descriptions. Finally, decentralization and empowerment are clear in order to serve and satisfy hotel guests.

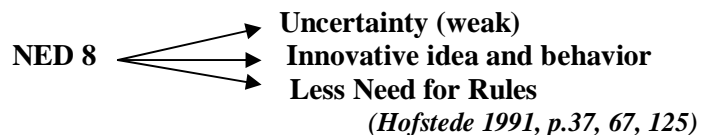


Also according to the NED 8, a receptionist said that:

1. *“the human resource department always recruits qualified staff and employees”*
2. *“then gives them training programmes that teach staff how innovatively perform to exceed guests' expectations”*
3. *“hotel rules are important but they are certainly not enough”*
4. *“because a lot of questions and requests coming from guests are unexpected and in such situation service employee should perform in an innovative way not follow the hotel rule”*

Expressions such as *the human resource department always recruits qualified staff and employees, then gives them training programs that teach staff how innovatively perform to exceed guests' expectations, hotel rules important but they are certainly not enough, simply because a lot of questions and requests coming from guests are unexpected and in such situation service employee should perform in innovative way not follow the hotel rules* can be classified in three weak uncertainty and individualism dimensions based on Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These four categories are:

1. *Uncertainty (weak)*
2. *Innovative idea & Behavior*
3. *Less Need for Rules*



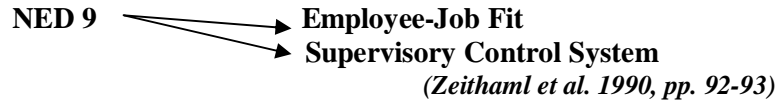
According to the NED 9, a cleaner said that:

1. *“as I am here in this hotel to perform a very clear and specific task, it is quite reasonable to be paid more if I do my job well or vice versa”*
2. *“the hotel management takes into account every performance in all promotion and performance appraisal process”*
3. *“so performing well with hotel guests means also performing well with the hotel management”*

Expressions such as, *as I am here in this hotel to perform a very clear and specific task, it is quite reasonable to be paid more if I did my job well or vise versa, the hotel management takes into account every performance in all promotion and performance appraisal process, so performing well with hotel guests means also performing well with the hotel*

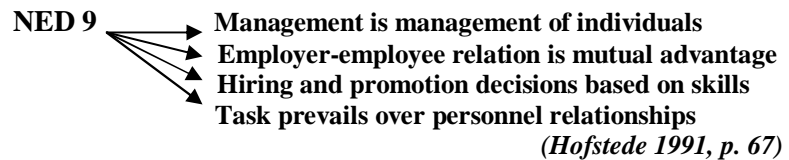
**management** can be classified in two categories of the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) based on the Extended Gap Model (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990 pp. 92-93). These two categories are:

1. **Employee-Job Fit**
2. **Supervisory Control System**



Also, the above expressions can be classified into four categories of individualism dimension based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991, p. 67). These categories are:

1. **Management is management of individuals**
2. **Employer-employee relationship is mutual advantage**
3. **Hiring & promotion decisions based on skills**
4. **Task prevails over personnel relationships**



**Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 1)**

By examining power distance and the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between small power distance and Performance Gap 3. This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED 14 on one hand with NED 7 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (3, 1) as illustrated in the next Table.

National Culture	Service Quality	Performance Gap 3	NED 7
Small Power Distance NED 14	NED 14 Decentralization Interdependence	NED 7 Perceived Control	
	Perceived Control	Decentralization Interdependence	

**Table 6.25.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 1)**

• **The Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 3, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and Performance Gap 3 (NED 16, NED 17, NED 18, NED 7, NED 8, and NED 9) as illustrated in the following Table (6.26):

National Culture	Service Quality	Performance Gap 3	NED 7, NED 8, NED 9
Weak Uncertainty Avoidance NED 16, NED 17, NED 18		Model Cell (3, 2)	

**Table 6.26 The Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code NED 16, NED 17 and NED 18 on pages 206-208 and followed by codes NED 7, NED 8 and finally NED 9 on pages 217-219.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

By examining uncertainty avoidance and the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between weak uncertainty avoidance and the performance service quality gap (Gap 3). This relation can be fully explained by linking code NED17 on one hand with code NED 8 on the other hand inside the improved model cell (3, 2).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NED 8	
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 17	<b>NED 17</b> Uncertainty (weak) Less Need for Rules Innovative Idea & Behavior  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	<b>NED 8</b> Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty (weak) Less Need for Rules Innovative Idea & Behavior

**Table 6.26.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (3, 3)**

Taking into account all codes of individualism and third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3), the examination of these six codes (NED 19, NED 20, NED 21, NED 7, NED 8, and NED 9) represents the improved model cell number (3, 3) as illustrated in the following Table (6.27).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NED 7, NED 8, NED 9
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (3, 3)

**Table 6.27 The Improved Model Cell (3, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how individualism dimension can affect the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code NED 19, NED 20 and NED 21 on pages 208-210 and followed by codes NED 7, NED 8 and finally NED 9 on pages 217-219.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 3)**

By examining individualism and performance service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes based on both the Extended Gaps Model and Hofstede’s Culture Model, an explanatory relation may be conceptualized between individualism and service quality performance gap (Gap 3). This relation can be fully explained by linking codes NED 19, NED 20 on one hand with NED 9 on the other hand inside the prototype model cell (3, 3) as illustrated in the next Table (6. 27.1).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NED 9	
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20	<b>NED 19, NED 20</b> Management is management of individuals Employer-employee relation is mutual advantage Hiring & Promotion decisions are based on skills Task prevails personnel relations  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory Control System	<b>NED 9</b> Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system  Management is management of individuals Employer-employee relation is mutual advantage Hiring & Promotion decisions are based on skills Task prevails personnel relations

Table 6.27.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 3)

**The Improved Model Cell (3, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of long-term orientation and the third service quality (Performance Gap 3), the examination of these six codes (NED 22, NED 23, NED 24, NED 7, NED 8 and NED 9) represents the improved model cell number (3, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.28).

National Culture \ Service Quality	Performance Gap 3 NED 7, NED 8, NED 9
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (3,4)

Table 6.28 The Improved Model Cell (3, 4)

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how long-term orientation dimension can affect the performance gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes NED 22, NED 23 and NED 24 on pages 211-212 and followed by codes NED 7, NED 8 and finally NED 9 on pages 217-219.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (3, 4)**

The examination of long-term orientation and third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between long-term orientation and performance service quality gap (Gap 3). Long-term Orientation codes (NED 22, NED 23, and NED 24) are classified into one category, which called long-term results that cannot fully explains the performance service quality gap. In other words, long-term results dimension cannot empirically explain why NED member’s performance is always dominated by task& individual performance criteria. In this case, the long-term orientation within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Performance Gap 3</b> NED 7, NED 8, NED 9
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, Ned 24		<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.28.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (3, 4)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

Taking into account all codes of power distance and forth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4), the examination of these six codes (NED 13, NED 14, NED 15, NED 10, NED 11, and NED 12) represents the improved model cell number (column 4, row 1) as illustrated in the following Table (6.29).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NED 13, NED 14, NED 15		<b>Model Cell</b> (4, 1)

**Table 6.29 The Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how power distance can affect the last service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. For doing so, the examination starts with code NED 10.

According to this code, the marketing & sales manager said that:

1. *“the final hotel’s advertising is the outcome of hotel departments’ cooperation”*
2. *“in order to design and create a successful advertising, a lot of departments should contribute to it”*

Expressions such as, *the final hotel’s advertising is the outcome of hotel departments’ cooperation. In order to design and create a successful advertising, a lot of departments should contribute to it* can be classified into one category of communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117). This category is:

1. **Horizontal communication (Extensive)**

This category refers to the extensive horizontal communications across the NED hotel functions or departments. It also refers to the internal and external marketing with the NED hotel case.



The NED 10 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

According to the NED 11 code, the cleaner said:

1. *“it is logical to cooperate with other people in other departments such as people in reception or Health club and Spa”*

Expressions such as *it is logical to cooperate with other people in other departments such as people in reception or Health club and Spa* can be classified into one category of service quality communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117), this category is called as:

1. **Horizontal Communication (Extensive)**

Similar to NED 10 code, this category refers to the extensive horizontal communications across the NED hotel departments.

**NED 11** —————> **Horizontal Communications**  
(Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117)

The NED 11 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

According to NED 12 code, the general manager said:

1. “the hotel is considered as a system, so there is common sense among hotel departments and functions to work in a cooperative way to communicate what the guests will receive when they come and stay in the hotel”

Expressions such as *the hotel is considered as a system, so there is common sense among hotel departments and functions to work in a cooperative way to communicate what the guests will receive when they come and stay in the hotel* can be classified into one category of service quality communication gap (Gap 4) based on the Extended Gaps Model of service quality (Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117). This category is called as:

1. *Horizontal communication (Extensive)*  
**NED 12** —————> **Horizontal Communication**  
(Zeithaml et al.1990, p. 117)

The NED12 code does not have any empirical assessment or examination based on Hofstede’s Culture Model of national culture (Hofstede 1991).

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

The examination of small power distance and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between small power distance and communications gap (Gap 4). Small power distance codes (NED 13, NED 14, and NED 15) are classified into four categories, which called equality of power, hierarchy of roles, interdependence, subordinates should be consulted and decentralization that cannot fully, explains the communications service quality gap. In other words, power distance dimension cannot directly explain why NED hotel communications are extensive across the hotel functions and departments. In this case, the small power distance within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the communication service quality gap (Gap 4).

<b>National Culture</b>	<b>Service Quality</b>
<b>Small Power Distance</b> NED 13, NED 14, NED 15	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.29.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 1)**

**The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 4, row 2), the examination involves the codes of uncertainty avoidance and service communication gap (Gap 4) (NED 16, NED 17, NED 18, NED 10, NED 11, and NED 12) as illustrated in the following Table (6.30):

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 16, NED 17, NED 18	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,2)

**Table 6.30 The Prototype Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how uncertainty avoidance can affect the fourth service quality gap (Gap 4) and by which mechanisms. The examination started with code NED 16, NED 17 and NED 18 on pages 206-208 and followed by codes NED 10, NED 11 and finally NED 12 on pages 222-223.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 2)**

The examination of uncertainty avoidance and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between weak uncertainty avoidance and communications gap (Gap 4).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b> NED 16, NED 17, NED 18	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.30.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 2)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

Within the prototype model cell (column 4, row 3), the examination involves the codes of individualism dimension and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) (NED 19, NED 20, NED 21, NED 10, NED 11, and NED 12) as illustrated in the following Table (6.31):

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,3)

**Table 6.31 The Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how individualism can affect the communications gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes NED 19, NED 20 and NED 21 on pages 208-210 and followed by codes NED 10, NED 11 and finally NED 12 on pages 222-223.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

The examination of individualism and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between individualism and communications service quality gap (Gap 4). Individualism codes (NED 19, NED 20, and NED 21) are classified into four categories, which called management is management of individuals, relationship employer-employee is mutual advantage, hiring & promotion decisions are based on skills, and task prevails over personnel relationships that



cannot fully, explains the fourth service quality gap. In other words, individualism dimension cannot directly explain why NED hotel communications among hotel departments or functions are extensive. In this case, the individualism within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Individualism</b> NED 19, NED 20, NED 21	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.31.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 3)**

**The Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

Taking into account all codes of long- term orientation and the fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4), the examination of these six codes (NED 22, NED 23, NED 24, NED 10, NED 11, and NED 12) represents the last prototype model cell (4, 4) as illustrated in the following Table (6.32).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24	<b>Model Cell</b> (4,4)

**Table 6.32 The Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of these six codes aims at explaining how long-term orientation dimension can affect the communication gap of service quality and by which mechanisms. The examination started with codes NED 22, NED 23 and NED 24 on pages 211-212 and followed by codes NED 10, NED 11 and finally NED 12 on pages 222-223.

**Findings for Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

The examination of long-term orientation and fourth service quality gap (Communications Gap 4) codes reveals that there is an empirical difficulty to conceptualize a central relation between long-term orientation and communications service quality gap (Gap 4). Long-term orientation codes (NED 22, NED 23, and NED 24) are classified into one category, which called long-term results that cannot empirically explains the communications service quality gap. In other words, long-term orientation dimension cannot empirically explain why NED hotel departments extensively communicate and in internal and external matters. In this case, the long-term orientation dimension within the NED hotel case cannot empirically provide possible interpretations over this gap (Communications Gap 4).

<b>Service Quality</b> <b>National Culture</b>	<b>Communications Gap 4</b> NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Long-term Orientation</b> NED 22, NED 23, NED 24	<b>No Crosscutting Examples</b>

**Table 6.32.1 Findings for the Improved Model Cell (4, 4)**

In Figure 6.3, the national culture – service quality relations found within the NED hotel are summarized.

<b>Service Quality</b>	<b>Information Gap 1</b>		<b>Specifications Gap 2</b>		<b>Performance Gap 3</b>		<b>Communication Gap 4</b>
<b>National Culture</b>	NED 1, NED 2, NED 3		NED 4, NED 5, NED 6		NED 7, NED 8, NED 9		NED 10, NED 11, NED 12
<b>Small Power Distance</b>  NED 13, NED 14, NED 15	NED 15 Equality of Power Flat Relations  Management levels	NED 2 Management levels  Equality of power Flat Relations	NED 13 Interdependence Subordinates be consulted  Standardization Goal Setting	NED 4 Standardization Goal Setting  Interdependence Subordinates be consulted	NED 14 Decentralization Interdependence  Perceived Control	NED 7 Perceived Control  Decentralization Interdependence	?
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b>  NED 16, NED 17, NED 18	NED 18 Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules  Upward Communications	NED 3 Upward Communication  Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules	NED 16 Uncertainty weak Innovative Idea & Behavior  Management Commitment Goal Setting	NED 5 Management Commitment Goal Setting  Uncertainty Innovative Idea & Behavior	NED 17 Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules Innovative Idea  Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit	NED 8 Role Conflict Employee-Job Fit  Uncertainty weak Less Need for Rules Innovative idea	?
<b>Individualism</b>  NED 19, NED 20, NED 21	?		?		NED 19 NED 20 Relation is Mutual Hiring&Promotion Management of Individuals Task over Relation  Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system	NED 9 Employee-Job Fit Supervisory control system  Relation is Mutual Hiring& Promotion Management of Individuals Task over Relation	?
<b>Long-term Orientation</b>  NED 22, NED 23, NED 24	NED 22 Long-term Results  Marketing Research	NED 1 Marketing Research  Long-term Results	?		?		?

### 6. 3 The Second Dutch Hotel (NED) Case Study Summary

### **6.3. 5 Finding and Conceptualizing the Mechanisms within the NED Case**

There are seven mechanisms in the improved model (M1) and another, additional, mechanism can be emphasized drawn from the empirical investigation of the second Dutch hotel (see Figure 6.4). Comparing with the first Dutch hotel (NL) case study, the second Dutch hotel (NED) investigation emphasizes all the same seven mechanisms that were found in the first Dutch hotel case (NL). The NED investigation revealed an additional mechanism that can be conceptualized as “*Participative Leadership-Driven in Setting Service Quality Specifications*”. This additional mechanism should be included in the final model (M2) of national culture - service quality relations. Based on the empirical investigation of the NED hotel case study, it is reasonable to firstly re-summarize the original seven mechanisms and, secondly, to conceptualize and add the new mechanism as follows:

**Cell 1.1 *Functional-Driven Information Gathering & Sharing***: this mechanism explains the effects of small power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**Cell 1.2 *Open and informal-Driven Communication***: this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**Cell 1.4 *Guest Relationship-Driven Information Gathering***: this mechanism explains the effects of long-term orientation on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**Cell 2.2 *Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality***: this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**Cell 3.1 *Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality***: this mechanism explains the effects of small power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**Cell 3.2 *Guest Satisfaction-Driven Performing***: this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**Cell 3.3 *Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task***: this mechanism explains the effects of individualism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

The additional mechanism: **Cell 2.1 “*Participative Leadership-Driven in Setting Service Quality Specifications*”**. This mechanism describes how the NED hotel’s top managers and senior supervisors always involve service employees in setting service quality specifications and standards (and so closing/eliminating the second service quality gap). The small power distance among NED hotel staff members (managers and service employees) encourages a participative leadership style or behavior from the top managers and senior supervisors towards the frontline service employees. In the NED hotel, the top managers and senior supervisors, as leaders allow service employees, in many cases, to be consulted in the standardization process of service quality. The top managers and frontline service employees are interdependent in the service quality standardization process. In other words, a lot of participative behavior is directed by the excreted top managers and supervisors towards frontline service employees.

In Figure 6. 4, the mechanisms found within the NED hotel are summarized.

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
<b>Small Power Distance</b>	Functional Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	Participative Leadership Driven in Setting Service Quality Specifications	Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality	?
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</b>	Open and Informal Driven Communication	Guest Satisfaction Driven Specifying Service Quality	Guest-Satisfaction Driven Performing	?
<b>Individualism</b>	?	?	Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task	?
<b>Long- term Orientation</b>	Guest Relationship Driven Information Gathering	?	?	?

Figure 6.4 The Mechanisms within the NED Hotel Case Study

## 6.4 Comparing the MIS and NED Case Studies: A Final Model of National Culture - Service Quality Relations

In this section, the task is to compare the second pair of case studies (the second Egyptian [MIS] and second Dutch [NED]). The comparison is intended to uncover the similar and different mechanisms that can give the improved model (M1) added value leading to the final research model (M2) of national culture - service quality relations (see the next Figure 6.5). The findings are significant in the sense that an additional mechanism “*Participative Leadership Driven in Setting Service Quality Specifications*” is added to the improved model (M1). In doing so, the resulting final research model (M2) has fourteen mechanisms that explain how national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps.

### 1. Power distance and Service Quality

The effects of power distance on service quality can be explained using five mechanisms:

**1.1 Hierarchical-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing:** this mechanism explains the effects of large power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**1.2 Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control:** this mechanism explains the effects of large power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**1.3 Functional Driven Information Gathering and Sharing:** this mechanism explains the effects of small power distance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**1.4 Participative Leadership-Driven in Setting of Service Quality Specifications:** this mechanism explains the effects of large power distance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**1.5 Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality:** this mechanism explains the effects of small power distance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
<b>Power Distance:</b> Large  Small	Hierarchical Driven Information Gathering and Sharing  Functional Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	Participative Leadership Driven in Setting Service Quality specifications	Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control  Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality	?
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance:</b> Strong  Weak	Close and Formal Driven Communication  Open and Informal Driven Communication	Money Driven Specifying Service Quality  Guest Satisfaction Driven Specifying Service Quality	System Border Driven Performing  Guest Satisfaction Driven Performing	Close and Formal Driven Communication
<b>Individualism/Collectivism:</b> Collectivism  Individualism	?	?	Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships  Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task	?
<b>Long-/Short-term Orientation</b> Short-term  Long-term	Guest Relationship Driven Information Gathering	Money Driven Specifying Service Quality	?	?

Figure 6.5 A Final Model of National Culture-Service Quality Relations

## 2. Uncertainty Avoidance and Service Quality

The effects of uncertainty avoidance on service quality can be explained by six mechanisms:

**2.1 Close and Formal-Driven Communication:** this mechanism explains the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the first and fourth service quality gaps (Information Gap 1 and Communication Gap 4).

**2.2 Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism explains the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**2.3 System Border-Driven Performing:** this mechanism explains the effects of strong uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**2.4 Open and Informal-Driven Communication:** this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

**2.5 Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**2.6 Guest Satisfaction-Driven Performing:** this mechanism explains the effects of weak uncertainty avoidance on the third service quality gaps (Performance Gap 3).

### **3. Individualism/Collectivism and Service Quality**

The effects of individualism/collectivism on service quality can be explained by two mechanisms:

**3.1 Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships:** this mechanism explains the effects of collectivism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

**3.2: Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task** this mechanism explains the effects of individualism on the third service quality gap (Performance Gap 3).

### **4. Long- /Short -Term Orientation and Service Quality**

The effects of long/short term orientation on service quality can be explained by two mechanisms:

**4.1 Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality:** this mechanism explains the effects of short-term orientation on the second service quality gap (Specifications Gap 2).

**4.2 Guest Relationship-Driven Information Gathering:** this mechanism explains the effects of long-term orientation on the first service quality gap (Information Gap 1).

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions, Impacts and Suggestions for Further Research**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The two empirical investigations carried out in Chapters 5 and 6 concluded with a new model for national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. This new model is pioneering in both its theoretical and practical nature as it is the first to link national culture dimensions to service quality gaps in a single preliminary explanatory construction. The question now is to what extent this new model is theoretically adequate and practically helpful, or usable, in improving service quality in the hotel sector. In order to answer this question, Section 7.2 begins with reviewing the research problem and questions and how these were tackled throughout this research. Section 7.3 presents the new model with its primary functions in three related parts: *1) the final design of the model as a 4 × 4 matrix, 2) the first model function in terms of the new mechanisms uncovered and conceptualized, and 3) the second model function in terms of providing new insights that could help to improve service quality in the hotel sector.* Based on this, the theoretical as well as the managerial impacts of the model are presented in Section 7.4. The research limitations are addressed in Section 7.5, and following on Section 7.6 provides suggestions for further research.

### **7.2 Addressing the Research Problem and Question**

In this research, the problem was stated as: *Service quality in the hotel sector has international and multicultural delivery features and this increases the challenges and problems of delivering improved service quality due to the effects of national culture. This situation contributes to the challenge of understanding how national culture affects service quality.* Accordingly, the research objective was to build a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations that can be used to perform two specific functions: Firstly, to determine and conceptualize the mechanisms by which national culture affects service quality. Secondly, to provide new insights that could help in improving service quality in the hotel sector. To accomplish this research objective, there was one main research question which rephrased and broken down into three sub-questions that have been answered through this investigation. The research question was formulated as: *To what extent can a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations be built in order to help in improving service quality in the hotel sector?*

**This main research question was rephrased using three sub-questions as follows:**

- 1.** What prototype model is appropriate for the assessment of the national culture-service quality relations?
- 2.** How should the prototype model be evaluated in order to achieve a preliminary explanatory model of national culture-service quality relations?
- 3.** To what extent is the preliminary explanatory model of national culture-service quality relations theoretically adequate and practically helpful and usable in improving service quality in the hotel sector?

To answer the above three sub-questions, the research started by considering the theoretical background and focusing on both service quality and national culture theories as presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 provided the research methodology that has been used throughout the whole research. Specifically, a theory construction approach (in terms of model construction) was chosen as an appropriate research method. Using this approach, a prototype model (Mo) of national culture - service quality relations was built in Chapter 4. This prototype model represents a part of the reality in the hotel sector (Pidd 1996). From this, the Extended Gap Model of service quality and Hofstede's Culture Model of national culture together provided

the theoretical foundation through which the prototype model could be built and improved. Chapters 2, 3 and 4, these provided an adequate answer to the first research sub-question.

Aiming to improve the prototype model and then develop a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations, the prototype model was evaluated throughout two empirical rounds of investigation presented in Chapters 5 and 6. Respectively, each empirical investigation, or round, involved two distinct hotel case studies (one Egyptian-based and one Dutch). A variety of tools (interviews, observations and document recording) were used in order to assemble the empirical data and evidence. Further, grounded theory techniques (open, and axial coding) were used in order to analyse the data collected from each of the hotel case studies. Following the data analysis, a new model of national culture - service quality relations was developed and finalized at the end of Chapter 6. Thus, Chapters 5 and 6 satisfied the second research sub-question.

The new model has specific two functions. First, the model determines and conceptualizes the mechanisms by which each of the national culture dimensions affects each service quality gap. Second and more important, the model provides new insights that could help in improving service quality in the hotel sector. The question now is whether the new model can be considered as a general principle and widely applicable especially in the hotel sector. In order to answer this final research sub-question, the next section presents the new model and its final matrix design.

### 7.3 A New Model of National Culture-Service Quality Relations

Based on the empirical investigations that have been discussed in the previous two chapters (see especially Figure 5.7 [p. 153] and Figure 6.5 [p. 229]), a preliminary explanatory model can be now fully assembled and presented. The new model is presented as 4 x 4 matrix to bring into focus the mechanisms and the new insights that could help in improving service quality (see Figure 7.1). As illustrated in Figure 7.1, the matrix model assists in linking two different levels of variables for the first time: national culture values and beliefs on the one hand and service quality behaviors and practices on the other. Thus, this matrix model of national culture - service quality relations is considered as a new working construction that: firstly, identifies how national culture affects service quality, and through which mechanisms, and, secondly, provides new insights that could help hotel providers (managers and service employees) in dealing with the four internal gaps of service quality and so could help to improve service quality.

Initially, the model assists in explaining the multi-determined relations or links between national culture dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long-/short-term orientation) and service quality gaps (information gap 1, specifications gap 2, performance gap 3, and communications gap 4). In other words, what occurs on the level of national values and beliefs has multiple consequences on the behaviors of managers and employees' behaviors in dealing with the internal service quality gaps. One can characterise these multi-determined relations as multi-effect relationships. For instance, power distance has effects on the first three service quality gaps. In more details, the national culture dimensions affect the behaviors of both managers and employees in trying to close/eliminate the four service quality gaps, and the model mechanisms refer to how this takes place.

The model includes fourteen mechanisms, providing many simultaneous insights and possibilities for service quality gap analysis that can be taken into account by hotel providers (managers and service employees) in dealing with the internal service quality gaps. For instance, in terms of the first gap analysis possibilities (dealing with the information gap 1), hotel managers can look at this information gap in three various ways or possibilities based on the model mechanisms. **The first possible way;** the information gathering and sharing



behaviors between top managers or middle managers/supervisors and their subordinates (frontline service employees): in this gap analysis option, hotel top managers and supervisors need to determine to what extent guest information gathering and sharing behaviors are functional or hierarchical driven (in model cell 1,1 in Figure 7.1)..

Service Quality National Culture	Information Gap 1	Specifications Gap 2	Performance Gap 3	Communication Gap 4
<b>Power Distance</b> Large     Small	Hierarchical- Driven Information Gathering and Sharing	Money- Driven Specifying Service Quality	Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control   Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality	Culture-Service Quality Mechanisms?
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b> Strong    Weak	Close and Formal Driven Communication   Open and Informal Driven Communication	Money- Driven Specifying Service Quality   Guest Satisfaction- Driven Specifying Service Quality	System Border- Driven Performing   Guest Satisfaction- Driven Performing	Close and Formal Driven Communication
<b>Individualism /Collectivism</b> Collectivism   Individualism	Culture-Service Quality Mechanisms?	Culture-service quality mechanisms?	Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships   Performance Driven by Dominance of Individual Task	Culture-service quality Mechanisms?
<b>Long-/Short- term Orientation</b> Short-term   Long-term	Guest Relationship Driven Information Gathering	Money- Driven Specifying Service Quality	Culture-Service Quality Mechanisms?	Culture-Service Quality Mechanisms?

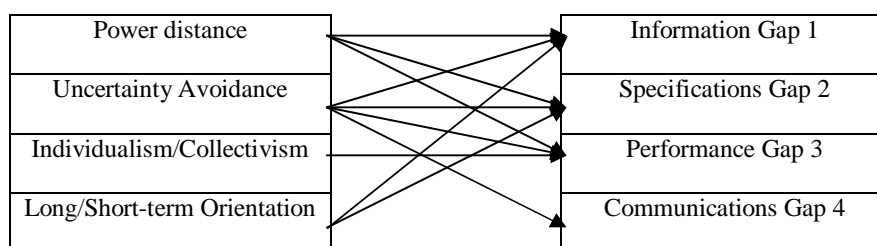
Figure 7.1 A Model of National Culture-Service Quality Relations

**The second possible way:** the communication behaviors between top managers or supervisors and their subordinates (frontline service employees). The hotel’s top managers need to determine to what extent communication behaviors are open/informal or closed/formal (model cell 1, 2 in Figure 7.1).

**The third possible way:** the relationship with hotel guests. In this option, hotel top managers need to determine to what extent relationships are built with hotel guests in their hotel (model cell 1, 4 in Figure 7.1).

The multi-effect relations of the national culture dimensions on the service quality gaps (see Figure 7.2) also allow the formulation of more complete service quality improvements in the hotel sector. Recognizing this culture-gap relation reduces the risk when attempting service

quality improvements by focusing on a single mechanism. If the hotel managers have problems with the first service quality gap (i.e. large information gap), it is not reasonable, based on this model, to link this service quality problem to only one of the three previous possibilities, such as linking the problem with to information gathering and sharing behaviors. The model provides two other possibilities for dealing with information gap problem, namely communication behaviors and building relationships with hotel guests. As a result, specific attention to these multi-effect relations is important when seeking upgrading for all service quality gaps with various improvement possibilities.



**Figure 7.2 The Multi-Effect National Culture - Service Quality Relations in the Hotel Sector**

### 7.3.1 The Model Functions

It is important to recognize that any model is built to achieve some specific objective or function (Kraaijenbrink 2006; Moreno Bragado 2003; Pidd 1996). Here, the new model that is presented in Figure 7.1 has two specific functions in the hotel sector: Firstly, to determine and conceptualizing the mechanisms by which national culture affects service quality. Secondly, to provide new insights that could help in improving service quality in the hotel sector. These two model functions are discussed more extensively below.

- **Conceptualizing Mechanisms**

The first function of the new model is to uncover and conceptualize the mechanisms through which national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. More precisely, the first function of the model is to determine the mechanisms by which each national culture dimension affects each service quality gap. The purpose of determining these mechanisms is to theoretically/conceptually link national culture to service quality. Here, the model is considered as a new constructed working theory that successfully represents a preliminary framework of national culture - service quality relations. Further, the model was successfully with its pioneering fourteen mechanisms to give adequate understanding of how the cultural values and beliefs translate into real managers' and employees' behaviors exerted and adopted to close/eliminate service quality gaps in the hotel sector. The question now emerging is what exactly the model mechanisms are.

#### **What exactly the model mechanisms are**

The model mechanisms that have emerged are conceptual links between national culture and service quality. The mechanisms represent categories of hotel managers' and employees' behaviors rooted in national culture that affect service quality in the hotel sector. Thus, the model mechanisms describe the behaviors of hotel staff in dealing with (closing/eliminating) service quality gaps that reflect their national culture backgrounds. They also provide preliminary explanations of the relations between national culture dimensions and service quality gaps. Therefore, the mechanisms contribute to identifying the underlying theoretical reasons and consequences for how national culture dimensions affect service quality gaps. In more details, the model mechanisms reveal that the national culture of hotel staff members

determine what is considered as optimal behaviors for dealing with each of the service quality gaps. The service quality gaps are an area where national culture seems to have a critical effect.

The question now turns to what is meant by the behaviors of the hotel managers and employees. Simply, managers' and employees' behaviors are the ways in which hotel employees (top managers, middle managers or supervisors and frontline service employees) act/react in dealing with the internal service quality gaps.

- **Providing New Insights for Service Quality Improvements in the Hotel Sector**

In this section, the second function of the model is addressed in terms of how the model can offer new insights that could help to improve service quality based on a better understanding of the effects of national culture on service quality. The model with its unique fourteen mechanisms focuses attention on fact that service quality improvements (dealing with the internal gaps) in the hotel sector are rooted in the behaviors of hotel staff members (managers and service employees). That is, the root cultural causes of service quality problems, and hence improvements are not the organizational issues such as structure, system or process. In other words, the root cultural causes of service quality issues are the top managers, middle managers (supervisors) and the frontline service employees' behaviors towards closing/eliminating the internal service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 4).

These behaviors can be seen in the fourteen model mechanisms. In enabling the hotel providers (managers and service employees) to get started with service quality improvements or "*Dealing with the Gaps*", the model could help them understand that there are some important staff behaviors that seem to (positively or negatively) affect the extent or size of each service quality gap. Further, the model various mechanisms indicate that there are various possible ways to deal with these gaps within hotels.

## **7.4 The Model Impacts**

The model's impacts or implications can be divided into two main elements: *Theoretical Impacts*, and *Managerial Impacts*. In the subsequent sections, these two elements are presented.

### **7.4.1 Theoretical Impacts**

The new model provides a contribution in an area that had not been covered before in the research on service quality and national culture. Using the first function of the model, conceptualizing new mechanisms, it was possible to identify and conceptualize fourteen mechanisms linking national culture to service quality in the hotel sector. These mechanisms create a new theoretical awareness that can be used by other researchers in the same field. The mechanisms successfully linked national culture dimensions to service quality gaps and give the model its preliminary explanatory properties.

The model's fourteen mechanisms are considered to be new theoretical/conceptual contributions to the theories of service quality and national culture. The existing literature on service quality and national culture (discussed in Chapter 2) did not contain any mechanisms. With the new model, conceptual links between national culture and service quality have been identified and presented. With this, the model also provides empirical evidence that contributes to the development of both service quality and national culture theories. The empirical evidence has revealed that manager and employee behaviors are important explanations of how national culture affects service quality in the hotel sector. In other words,

the effects of national culture on service quality could be explained by the behaviors of managers and employees. From the use of model mechanisms, a new theoretical assumption could be stated as:

***“Hotel providers differ in their managers’ and employees’ behaviors towards closing/eliminating the internal service quality gaps based on their national culture backgrounds”***

Through this new assumption, the model contributes to the theoretical field of the effects of national culture on service quality by including the role of managers’ and employees’ behaviors.

### **7.4.2 Managerial Impacts**

Hotel organizations, through their managers and service employees, are always seeking for new approaches that could help in improving service quality. Accordingly, a central question in many hotel organizations is *“how can we improve service quality”*. Using the new model, it is possible to propose some key insights that could assist in dealing with the various service quality gaps in the hotel sector. In addition, the model mechanisms are considered as a platform with which hotel providers (managers and service employees) can judge and understand the current behaviors and practices that are exerted and adopted in dealing with service quality gaps. By doing so, hotel providers can emphasize specific behaviors and practices that work well in dealing with service quality gaps. However, these behaviors or practices should not conflict with the national culture values and beliefs of hotel staff members.

Further, as seen the model; there are mechanisms for all the service quality gaps. Thus, Hotel providers (managers and service employees) need to be aware that all the service quality gaps should be dealt with together in order to improve service quality. In other words, focusing on closing/eliminating one or more, but not all, of the service quality gaps will not enable the hotel providers to attain and sustain service quality improvements based on understanding the effects of national culture.

Beyond the above practical contribution, the model has some implications that hotel managers could take into consideration:

- 1.** The model proves empirically that the effects of national culture on service quality are related to all hotel members, top managers, middle managers/supervisors and frontline service employees. It can be concluded from this observation that the success of any attempt at service quality improvements depends heavily on all hotel staff members not just on specific ones. In practical terms, all the hotel staff members should be involved and participate in such improvements.
- 2.** The model identifies that, when trying to improve service quality in the hotel sector (closing/eliminating the four internal gaps 1 to 4), hotel providers (managers and service employees) will define themselves culturally. In other words, their national culture, for instance whether they come from a large or a small power distance culture, will influence whether they can adopt certain actions. Thus, hotel providers particularly hotel managers need to understand to what extent specific service quality improvements actions can or can not be applied in their hotels because of a potential match/mismatch of these actions with the national culture.

Furthermore, the model also identifies that a small power distance culture empowers service employees whereas cultures with large power distance are less suited to employee empowerment. In such situation, it is important for hotel providers in particular hotel managers to understand that service quality improvements are not the only critical matters but also the national culture backgrounds within which these improvements will be applied.

## **7.5 The Model Limitations**

This section considers the limits of this research in terms of six identified model limitations. These limitations could be addressed in future field research of the effects of national culture on service quality in the hotel sector in particular, or in service sectors in general. The six model limitations are outlined below.

1. The model approach to service quality is limited to service provider perspective (service quality gaps 1 to 4) and does not address the guest/customer perspective (service quality gap 5 perceived service quality).
2. The model's perspective on national culture is limited to four of the cultural dimensions of Hofstede's Culture Model. The fifth cultural dimension, labeled masculinity versus femininity, was not addressed in this investigation.
3. The empirical investigation used in developing the model is based on only four hotel case studies in two distinctly different cultural contexts (two in Egypt and two in the Netherlands).
4. The model has six empty cells where no national culture – service quality mechanism was found. That is, the empirical investigation, i.e. the hotel case studies, did not indicate any mechanisms for these six cells. The six empty model cells are:

Cell 1.3: the relation between individualism/collectivism and the information gap.

Cell 2.3: the relation between individualism/collectivism and the specifications gap.

Cell 3.4: the relation between long-/short -term orientation and the performance gap.

Cell 4.1: the relation between power distance and the communications gap.

Cell 4.3: the relation between individualism/collectivism and the communications gap.

Cell 4.4: the relation between long-/short -term orientation and the communications gap.

However, it should not be overlooked that these cells may be empty because there is no relation between certain cultural dimension and specific service quality gaps. For example, cell 1.3 may empty, because the individualism/collectivism dimension of national culture has no influence on closing the in formation gap. Also, cell 1.3 may be empty, because there is a mechanism describes how individualism/collectivism dimension affects the information gap but was not discovered within these specific four hotel cases conducted in this research.

5. The model does not more than conceptualize mechanisms by which each national culture might affect the service quality gaps. In this regard, these model mechanisms should be operationalized and measured in the hotel sector and/or other service sectors.
6. The model is not tested, and consequently there remains a need to test the model in order to first generalize the model as a new constructed working theory in the hotel sector and, second to validate its reliability and broader applications in other service sectors.

## **7.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

Based on the model's limitations, the following agenda for further research areas is proposed (see Figure 7.3).

### 1. The Model Extension

There are two further research areas involving additional extensions that could be investigated in terms of the model. One area is that further research is needed to confirm the model’s fourteen mechanisms. The other area is to attempt to find mechanisms for the six empty model cells. Future investigations could be conducted in both the Egyptian and Dutch hotel sectors in order to confirm the current model mechanisms and conceptualize new mechanisms for the empty model cells.

### 2. The Model Application

The model is based on empirical observations and evidence from the hotel sector. Thus, there is a research needed on how to apply the model in the hotel sector. One approach for the hotel sector could be to develop a consultancy plan based on the model for hotel providers in specific countries such as Egypt and the Netherlands. Another application could be developing training programmes for hotel managers and service employees in order to enhance and improve their servicing performance.

### 3. Adding a Cultural Dimension to the Model

Further research is needed to investigate the effects of the masculinity versus femininity cultural dimension on the service quality gaps. This research could start by adding the masculinity/femininity dimension to the model matrix in order to examine how this cultural dimension affects the information gap, the specifications gap, the performance gap and the communications gap 4 in the hotel sector.

#### Further Research

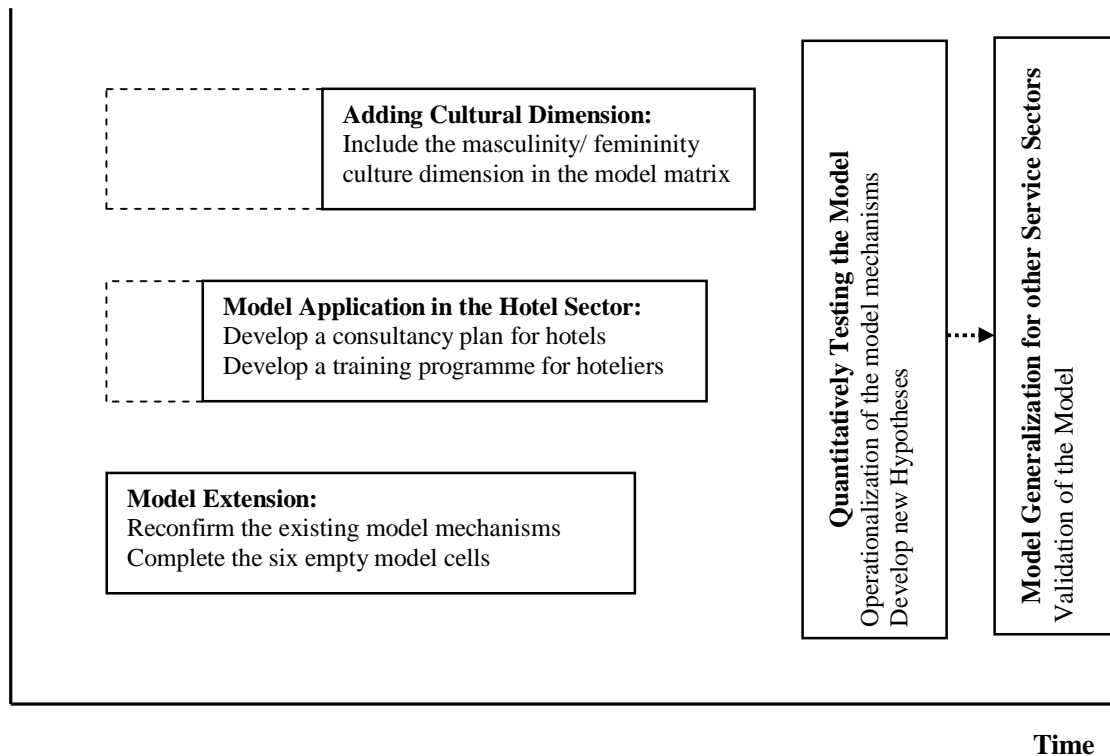


Figure 7.3: Suggestions for Further Research

#### **4. The Model Testing**

The next research area to consider involves the operationalization of the model mechanisms and measurement in the hotel sector. Testing the model will require the development of hypotheses linking the model's national culture dimensions to the internal service quality gaps. In this area, future research could determine which mechanisms need to be operationalized will to provide the most reliable and valid explanations for national culture - service quality relations in the hotel sector. Future research could also develop and quantitatively test, national culture – service quality hypotheses in the hotel sector. .

#### **5. The Model Generalization**

Once the model-mechanisms have been operationalized and the culture - service quality hypotheses quantitatively tested, the model could be tested in other service sectors such as airline organizations, and tourism agencies.

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## **Appendix 1:**

### **LETTER OF INQUIRY**

**Dear**

I am Yasser Ahmed Al Tayeb, a doctoral candidate at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. I am currently carrying out a doctoral research project on:

#### **“The Effects of National Culture on Service Quality” Towards A New Model In The Hotel Sector**

My PhD research is an international cooperation project involving the Egyptian Government, the University of Twente and the Maastricht School of Management to fulfill the requirements for doctoral a degree in the service quality management field. The empirical design and method of this research project are built on conducting interviews with hotel general managers, hotel department managers, and hotel frontline service employees as key informants from the Egyptian/Dutch hotel sectors. I am interested in using your hotel as a case study for my doctoral thesis, since your hotel is seen as one of the successful luxury hotels with international and local representations for high quality in Egypt/the Netherlands. Therefore, I would like to ask for your collaboration and seeking an opportunity to interview you at your convenience.

With the international changes in hotel service demands and standards, improving service quality has become one of the competitive choices for many hotel managers in order to enlarge their hotels and compete in such new market changes and challenges. The main objective of my research is to get an inside view and look into the field of hotel service quality improvements based on fully understanding national culture circumstances and situations. Thus, the research findings should be helpful for hotel managers and service employees in capturing new practical knowledge to meet the new service quality standards and requirements of their hotel guests.

Your specific answers to the guideline questions for the interview and all discussions will not be identified and namely mentioned in the research process or even in the final doctoral dissertation. All the personal identities and documents will remain anonymous, and confidential. No additional names will be mentioned without written permission from you. Further, all the data and information gathered, analyzed and utilized will be for academic reason only. As soon as I complete my doctoral project, I will be very pleased to present a summary of my final research contribution and results to you.

I am looking forward to your co-operation and the opportunity to interview you. If you have any more questions about my research project, please do not be hesitated in contacting me at:

Phone: +20552846812 Cairo, Egypt.  
+31614172545 Enschede, the Netherlands.

E-mails: [y.altayeb@utwente.nl](mailto:y.altayeb@utwente.nl)  
[altayeb@msm.nl](mailto:altayeb@msm.nl)

Your Sincerely  
Yasser AL Tayeb  
PhD Candidate

## **Appendix 2:**

### **The Case Study Protocol**

**The Hotel Cases:** EG, MIS, NL and NED Case Studies.

**Classification:** Luxury Egyptian and Dutch Hotels (owned and operated by native hoteliers).

#### **1. Purpose of Case Studies:**

The purposes of conducting these four luxury hotel case studies are as follows:

1. To empirically study and assess service quality practices and real behaviors based on a national culture approach in the Egyptian and Dutch hotel sectors.
2. To develop the empirical work needed for of the suggested research model.
3. To compile Chapters 5 and 6 of the final PhD dissertation as the empirical investigation of this research.

#### **2. Activities:**

To achieve the above objectives, the following activities are to be carried out:

1. Book an appointment with the general manager of each hotel.
2. Meet the general manager and give a short presentation (20-25 minutes) of the general ideas of the research topic and objectives.
3. Book another meeting (90-120 minutes) with the general manager as an interviewee.
4. Hold a meeting with the general manager and start an open discussion while asking him/her the guideline questions of the interview concerning service quality practices and behaviors as well as national culture dimensions. At the end of the meeting, I will ask him/her if it is possible to present my research idea in a general presentation to the hotel department managers.
5. Book a sequence of individual meetings with the hotel's departments managers.
6. Conduct the meetings with the department managers. During each meeting (90-120 minutes) I will introduce myself and then present the research topic and objective. Finally, I will ask each manager the interview guidelines questions in a open discussion. Further, there are general questions that should be asked to each interviewee i.e. her/his position, experience<sup>1</sup>. At the end of each meeting, I will ask the department manager if it is possible to meet some frontline service employees representing the department and the direct supervisor of these service employees.
7. Conduct meetings with the frontline hotel service employees. These meetings could be done individually or as a group. During these meetings there will be general questions about the hotel's local and international guests in terms of their general needs, their nationalities, the common complaints *etc.*
8. Observe the hotel's tangibles aspects and artifacts such as the reception offices, public area spaces, décor, furnishings, bedroom designs, bedding, linen and towels, employees' uniforms, the hotel restaurant designs *etc.* Further, observe employee-guest interactions, or service encounters, on several operational levels, i.e. room reservation for hotel guests, delivering food to guest rooms.
9. Reviewing documents and archival records and literature such as recent guest surveys by the marketing department, reviewing guests complaints, reservation forms, job descriptions for reception employees, reviewing the quality of training programmes

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<sup>1</sup> Note that some interviewees take less time for answering the listed questions, as a result they answer very quickly and briefly. In that case I will ask for another meeting with the same interviewees who did not feel that they have the expected time (90-120 minutes) for doing the interview.

for housekeeping employees, reviewing the home page of the hotel on the internet etc. Further, the hotel's annual reports and activity statements will be consulted. These documents offer data about the general objectives, vision and mission of the hotel.

### **3. Data Collection Procedures and Processes:**

#### **3.1 Data collection levels:**

*First the strategic/planning level/group:*

- The General Manager
- The Accounting & Financial Manager
- The Marketing & Sales Manager
- The Human Resources Manager

*Second, the operational level/group:*

- Front office Manager
- Housekeeping or Room Service Manager
- Food & Beverage Service Manager or the Restaurant Manager

*Third, the supervisors and service employees:*

- Service Employees at the Operational Group & Their Direct Supervisors.

#### **1.2 Data Collection Triangulation:**

- Individual Interview
- Observation
- Documents, Archival Records and Literature

#### **1.3 Data Collection Preparation:**

- The interview guideline questions will be prepared and written in terms of a checklist
- Sending a copy from the checklist to the interviewee before the meeting
- All of the interviews will be tape-recorded
- All of the interviews will be carried out in English language

### **4. Challenges of the Interviews**

The individual interview is the main data collection technique in this case study research. Many challenges will arise during these interviews. As a result, there is a need to address these various challenges in order to obtain and gather accurate data and information, to continue a good relationship and link with the interviewees for further data collection, and finally to provide valid data for the analysis explanations. The following challenges are likely to occur:

#### **4.1 The Interview Approach**

My choice is to carry out standardized open-ended interviews in each hotel case study. The guideline questions are carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each interviewee through the same sequences, and asking each respondent in each hotel the same questions. Using such an approach, the variation in the questions posed to each interviewee is minimized. Further, the data should be complete for each interviewee on the issues addressed in the interview and this will increase the comparability of the responses.

## **4.2 The Interview Question Guide**

The interview guide questions are prepared in order to make sure that same data and information are obtained from the individuals (managers and employees) in each hotel case by covering and answering the same questions. The guide contains eight constructs (service quality & national culture constructs), which let me as an interviewer to free build a conversation within every particular construct with the interviewee. This guide helps in making each interview more systematic and comprehensive by delimiting in advance the issues to be explained for each interviewee.

## **4.3 The Guideline Questions**

Four kinds of questions are put during the interviews, and these were carefully prepared as standardized, open-ended, instruments. First, there are operational questions, which concern the descriptions of experiences, behaviors, actions, and activities within the hotel. These activities and practices will also be observed during the research observations. Second, there are value questions which aim at understanding the cognitive and interpretive processes of the hotel staff members. The answers to these questions tell me, as the interviewer, what the hotel staff members think about the research constructs. Further, they tell us about the hotel members' intentions, goals, desires and values. Third, there are feeling questions that aim to understand the emotional responses of hotel staff members to their opinions and experiences. Finally, there background questions that concern the identifying characteristics of the hotel and its staff members. The answers to these questions help me, as the interviewer, to place the hotel in questions in relation to the other cases.

## **4.4 Time Frame and Number of Interviewees**

Any of the interview questions can be asked in the present tense, past tense, and future tense as appropriate. Based on the number of questions, each interview time is expected to take between 90 minutes and two hours. The number of interviewees is expected to be thirteen in each hotel: seven managers' interviews and three supervisors and three frontline employees' interviews at the operational level.

## **5. The Challenges of the Observation Technique**

Observation is the second data collection technique used in the research case study. The main purpose this is to describe hotel setting, the service quality operations and activities that take place in the hotel, the individuals who participate in these activities and, finally, the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed. Many challenges can arise during such observations as outlined follows:

### **5.1 Observer Involvement**

At the strategic/planning group (i.e. general manager, departments manager) level most of the observations are carried out by the researcher as an onlooker who gradually becomes a participant as the interview progresses. At the operational group (i.e. reception offices, room services & housekeeping and food & beverage) level, the researcher carried out most of the observations as an onlooker only.

### **5.2 Duration of the Observations:**

Another important issue is the length of time devoted to observational data gathering. In total, each hotel case was observed for one month. This duration was determined to the resources available in relation to the need for service quality plus national culture data and information

that has to be collected at the strategic/planning group and the operational group level in of each hotel case.

### 5.3 The Observational Focus or What to Observe

A major challenge or factor affecting each of the case observations is the scope of the observation. In other words, the observed aspects of the hotel case reality. Simply, it refers to the specific perspective on what is happening in the daily reality of the hotel setting. The decision about where the focus and the scope of the observation is based on the resources, the observation time and the limits in the researcher’s ability to grasp the complex nature of the hotel reality. To overcome this, a sensitizing framework was used while carrying out of the research observations. This framework provides sensitizing concepts that give a basic framework that highlights the importance of certain events, activities and behaviors being observed and recorded. In this sense, the researcher was aware of certain sensitizing details that should be observed at each hotel as follows:

#### 5.3.1 Reception and Reservation Department:

Location and Hotel Area	Observation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Hotel Reception Office</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Location of the hotel reception office.</li> <li>2. The reception staff uniform throughout day and evening.</li> <li>3. The greeting for new guests. Further, the first language used in first communication.</li> <li>4. Technical and social skills in the room reservation.</li> <li>5. The booking form that should be compiled</li> <li>6. Advanced information taken and asked form the guests at the time of booking and reservation; name, address, contact telephone.</li> <li>7. Advanced information given to guests (verbal/written): what is included in the price quoted for accommodation, taxes and other charges.</li> <li>8. Advanced warring given to the guests; opening time for the restaurant.</li> <li>9. Check out time, giving the guest any written and clear details of payments.</li> <li>10. Payment methods and facilities; the currency of payment.</li> <li>11. Payments accuracy and ensuring that purchases are clearly detailed.</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Hotel Public Areas</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Location of the hotel reception office.</li> <li>2. The reception staff uniform throughout day and evening.</li> <li>3. The greeting for the new guests. Further, the language used in the first communication.</li> </ol>



**5.3.2 Housekeeping/Room Service Departement:**

Location and Hotel Area	Observation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Hotel Room Service and the Housekeeping</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The daily cleaning of the bedrooms and check to ensure that rooms look clean and smell fresh. The performance quality of cleaning staff between first room and last room.</li> <li>2. All beds made daily. Bed linen, including duvet covers changed at least three times a week and for each new guest. Listening to the guest requests and reactions from the cleaning staff.</li> <li>3. Practices and procedures followed to keep clean bedding of floors and in ensuring that in-room crockery and glassware are washed hygienically.</li> <li>4. All walls, ceilings, pipes, and equipment are cleaned on a regular basis.</li> <li>5. Bedrooms size and space that allow guests freedom of movement.</li> <li>6. Minimum bed sizes: Single: 90 X 190 cm. Double: 137 X 190 cm.</li> <li>7. Number of sheets, blankets per bed and number of pillows per person.</li> <li>8. Laundry service and dry cleaning available and advertised.</li> <li>9. Irons and trouser press available in room.</li> <li>10. Size and number of color TV, air-conditioning, fans, etc.</li> <li>11. Morning telephone calls are available or not.</li> <li>12. Message delivery to guests or to their rooms.</li> <li>13. Local and foreign newspapers delivery at what time and how frequently.</li> </ol>

**5.3.3 Food & Beverage Service Department/Restaurant**

Location and Hotel Area	Observation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Hotel Food and Beverage Service</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Order times for food to be served in guests' bedrooms. Including the core time of serving.</li> <li>2. Ordering methods: reception telephone, in-room order cards.</li> <li>3. The trays and trolleys that can used and they easy able to accommodate.</li> <li>4. Prices of food served in bedrooms- differences to the hotel restaurant. (additional charges).</li> <li>5. A choice of hot and cold lunch dishes.</li> <li>6. Last order time for dinner served at the guest bedrooms.</li> </ol>

Location and Hotel Area	Observation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Hotel Restaurant</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The location of the hotel restaurant and how many restaurants are available.</li> <li>2. Restaurant opening times for hotel guests&amp; residents.</li> <li>3. Breakfast, lunch and dinner meals and drinks and the period for each meal.</li> <li>4. The restaurant staff showing reasonable knowledge and skills of available dishes.</li> <li>5. The meals' prices for local guests &amp; foreigners.</li> <li>6. A rang of light refreshments and snacks available to guests and non-guests.</li> <li>7. Drinks selections that are available and served in lounge.</li> <li>8. Staff skills in presenting cocktails and mixed drinks.</li> <li>9. Where smoking is permitted and efforts made to ensure non-smokers are not inconvenienced.</li> </ol>

## **Appendix 3:**

### **Interview Guideline Questions**

#### **Service Quality Gaps (Gap 1 to 4)**

##### **Service Quality Gap 1 (Information Gap):**

###### **1. Marketing Research:**

The extent to which the hotel managers and senior executives actually perform formal and informal information-gathering activities and researches to understand the hotel guests' expectations and needs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

###### ***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

1. How does generating and collecting information about the guests' needs and expectations help in delivering high service quality? Can you easily predict the guests' expectations?
2. What are the main methods used for generating or collecting such information in your hotel? How do you gather this information?
3. Who is in charge of gathering this information?
4. What kind of guest information (formal/informal) do you gather or collect?
5. Do you consider this kind of information is sufficient and enough? Why did you decide to collect such information?
6. What is the use of guest information? Do you use this information in delivering high services or in organizing internal processes of the service quality?

###### **2. Upward Communications:**

The extent to which hotel managers and senior executives actually seek, stimulate, and facilitate the flow of information from hotel employees at lower levels (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

###### ***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

7. Do you see a need to share and communicate guest information with hotel employees at lower levels?
8. In which form do you encourage receiving information & suggestions from the frontline service employees? E.g. reports, regular discussions, face to face meetings.
9. Is there a (formal/informal) channel for frontline employees to communicate with hotel managers and top executives about the guests' views?
10. Why did you decide to use such channels to communicate with the frontline employees?
11. What are the main characteristics of the communications within your hotel? Are they high context and non-verbal, or low context and verbal?

###### **3. Management Levels:**

Number of managerial levels between the topmost and bottommost positions in the hotel organization (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

###### ***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

12. What is the organizational structure of your hotel? Is it flat or hierarchical?
13. Does this structure facilitate the flow of guests' information within your hotel?
14. How many managerial levels separate hotel senior managers and executives from frontline employees?

**Service Quality Gap 2 (Specifications Gap):**

**4. Management Commitment to Service Quality:**

The extent to which hotel managers and senior executives consider service quality as a key strategic goal (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

1. What is the main goal in your hotel? e.g. profit, market share, satisfying guests
2. Do you see a need for a strategy of service quality improvements?
3. What kind of managerial support is committed to the hotel departments in order to achieve service quality improvements? i.e. do top managers' support and cooperate with the middle managers?
3. What kind of strategic programs exist in your hotel for improving service quality? e.g. quality programmes, training..
4. How often has your hotel provided such programmes in the last five years?
5. How long does each program last? 6. Who are participating in these programs?
6. What are the main incentives for the participants in such programmes? e.g. increased salaries, job promotions.
7. Who participates in these programmes

**5. Feasibility:**

The extent to which the hotel tangibly meets the guests' expectations and needs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

8. How do you assess the feasibility of your hotel satisfying guests?
9. What are the physical and personal capabilities in your hotel for meeting the guests' expectations and needs?
10. What are more important for your hotel: the physical capabilities or the personal capabilities?
11. Do you have problems/opportunities with the introduction and adaptation of new technologies?

**6. Task Standardization:**

The extent to which hard and soft technologies are used to standardizes service tasks. (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73).

12. Are the services that you deliver subjected to high degree of standardization?
13. Is the standardization in your hotel based on hard technology? e.g. computers, internal network, information data bases, e-mail, or on the soft technology? e.g. work processes, routines, rules..
14. What is the relative importance of each of these two technology types?

**7. Goal Setting:**

The extent to which the goals of service quality are based on external standards (guests' expectations) rather than internal standards (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

***Questions:***

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 73)

15. What is the main criterion for setting service quality goals in your hotel? Is it the guests' expectations or internal service standards?
16. What are the long and short-term goals in your hotel?
17. How do you measure performance in meeting these goals?

**Service Quality Gap 3 (Performance Gap):**

**8. Role Ambiguity in the Hotel:**

The extent to which hotel employees are uncertain about what the hotel managers and supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

1. What kind of information do you get from the hotel management about your job?
2. Do you consider this information is sufficient to accomplish your job and task?
3. In what ways this is information communicated to you?
4. Do you (personally) have a clear picture of what your job is compared with other jobs in the hotel?
5. How often has your hotel management provided you with training programs in the last five years?

**9. Role Conflict in the Hotel:**

The extent to which hotel employees cannot satisfy all the demands of all the internal and external individuals they must serve (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

6. Do the hotel managers and guests have the same expectations of you?
7. Do you have more work to do than time to do it in?
8. What kind of relationships do you have with your hotel managers? Is it formal or informal relation?

**10. Employee-Job Fit:**

The match between hotel employees' skills and their jobs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

9. Does the hotel management hire employees who are highly experienced or highly educated?
10. Why did you decide to work in this hotel?
11. What are the main staff selection ways and procedures in your hotel?
12. Does the hotel management devote sufficient time & resources to hiring the right employees?

**11. Technology-Job Fit:**

The appropriateness of the tools and technology that hotel employees use to perform their jobs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

13. What tools and equipment are needed to perform your job? Are they sufficient and available?
14. How often do these tools and equipments fail to operate?

**12. Supervisory and Control Systems:**

The appropriateness of the evaluation and reward systems in the hotel (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

15. What aspects of your job are mostly stressed in performance evaluation?
16. What is the relationship between what you do and what you are rewarded for?
17. What are the main reward forms in your hotel? e.g. financial rewards, career advancement, recognition.

**13. Perceived Control:**

The extent to which hotel employees can act flexibly in performing their jobs (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 92-93)

18. When do have freedom to make decisions in your job?
19. When do you need approval from your supervisor for doing your tasks?

**14. Teamwork:**

The extent to which employees and managers pull together for a common goal (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 53)

20. In what way are you encouraged to work together in your hotel?
21. How often has your manager cooperated with you rather than competed?

**Service Quality Gap 4 (Communications Gap):**

**15. Horizontal Communications:**

The extent to which communication occurs both within and between different departments of the hotel (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 117)

1. What do you think about the communication channels in your hotel? Are they open among the hotel departments or not?
2. Are the hotel policies and procedures consistent across the hotel departments and functions?

**16. Propensity to Overpromise:**

The extent to which the hotel's external communications accurately reflect what guests receive (Zeithaml *et al.* 1990).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Zeithaml *et al.* 1990, p. 117)

3. Do you (personally) have a clear picture of what the guests get within your hotel?
4. According to your criteria is the information available for the guests is sufficient?
5. Is this information sufficiently clear to allow guests to know exactly what they will receive from the hotel?

**National Culture Dimensions**

**1. Power Distance:**

The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research") within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede 1991, p. 28).

**a. Subordinate Level:**

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Hofstede 1991, p. 28)

1. Do you think that hotel members (i.e. superiors and subordinates) are equal? Why and based on what criteria?
2. Can you determine the behaviors of other hotel members? Whom and in which situations?
3. How frequently are you afraid to express disagreement with your boss/manager?
4. Do you influence your boss/manager in making decisions? To what extent?
5. What do you evaluate the relation with your boss/manager to be? autocratic, paternalistic, consultative.
6. Which kind of these relations do you prefer and why?

**b. Management Level:**

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Hofstede 1991, p.28)

7. Do you think that hotel staff members are equal? Why and based on what criteria?
8. In general, what kind of decision-making style do you have with your subordinates? i.e. autocratic, paternalistic, consultative..
9. Which kind of style would you prefer and why?

**3. Uncertainty Avoidance:**

The extent to which the members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations (Hofstede 1991, p.113).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Hofstede 1991, p.113)

1. How often do you feel nervous or tense at work in this hotel?
2. How often do you use the hotel rules to deal with an unexpected situations?
3. Do you think that hotel rules are important in such situations?
4. To what extent do you think that hotel rules should not be broken?
5. How long do you think you will continue working for this hotel?
6. What is your feeling if there would be an opportunity to work in another hotel but in a different job?

**2. Individualism/Collectivism:**

The extent to which the members of institutions and organizations (hotels in this research) within a country identify themselves as either an individual or as a member of a group (Hofstede 1991, p.50-53).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Hofstede, 1991, p.50-53)

1. Why did you decide to work with this hotel?
2. To what extent do you depend on the hotel to improve your skills and abilities?
3. According to your criteria, does the hotel give you sufficient time for your personal life?
4. To what extent does your hotel gives you freedom to adopt your own skills for doing your work? Are you always certain about this?
5. Do you prefer to be challenged in your work in this hotel? i.e. achieve a personal sense of accomplishment...
6. In which case do you prefer to cooperate with your group members rather than maximize the outcome of your job?
7. Do you consider the hotel staff members to be group or a collection of individuals?
8. In your opinion, which is more superior, the group decision or your decision?
9. Are you always certain about the training opportunities in your hotel?
10. Are you always certain about the physical conditions in your hotel work?

**4. Long-/Short-term Orientation:**

The extent to which the hotel staff members are oriented towards ether short-term or long-term goals on Confucian principle. (Hofstede & Bond 1988, as cited in Meekanon 2002).

**Questions:**

(Developed based on Hofstede & Bond 1988, as cited in Meekanon 2002)

1. What is the main priority in your goals for working in this hotel?
2. What are the criteria for achieving these goals? time, difficulty, etc.
3. In general terms, how would you evaluate the goal orientation in your hotel? short-term/ long-term etc.

## Appendix 4.

### **SERVQUAL Measurement Instrument**

*(Source: Zeithaml & Bitner 2003, pp. 136-137)*

#### **1) PERCIVED SERVICE QUALITY PERCEPTIONS**

<b>Perceptions statements in the reliability dimension</b>	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree							
1. When XYZ Company promises to do something by a certain time, it does so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
2. When you have problem, XYZ Company shows a sincere interest in solving it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
3. XYZ Company performs the service right the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
4. XYZ Company provides its services at the time it promises to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
5...XYZ Company keeps customers informed about when services will be performed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								

<b>Statement in the responsiveness dimension</b>	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree							
1. Employees in XYZ Company give you prompt service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
2. Employees in XYZ Company are always willing to help you	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
3. Employees in XYZ Company are never too busy to respond to your request.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								

<b>Statement in the assurance dimension</b>	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree							
1. The behavior of employees in XYZ Company instills confidence in you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
2. You feel safe in your transactions with XYZ Company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
3. Employees in XYZ Company are consistently courteous with you.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
4. Employees in XYZ Company have the knowledge to answer your question.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								



<b>Statements in the empathy dimension</b>	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree							
1. XYZ Company gives you individual attention	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
2. XYZ Company has employees who give you individual attention.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
3. XYZ Company has your best interest at heart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
4. Employees of XYZ Company understand your specific needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								

<b>Statements in the tangibles dimension</b>	Strongly Disagree							Strongly Agree							
1. XYZ Company has modern looking equipment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
2. XYZ Company's physical facilities are visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
3. XYZ Company's employees appear neat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
4. Materials associated with the service (such as pamphlets or statements) are visually appealing at XYZ Company.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
5. XYZ Company has convenient business hours.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								

**2) PERCIVED SERVICE QUALITY EXPECTATIONS: Several Formats for Measuring Customer Expectations:**

**Matching Expectations Statements (paired with the previous perception statements)**

When customers have a problem, excellent firms will show a sincere interest in solving it.

Strongly Disagree      Strongly Agree  
 1   2   3   4      5   6   7

**Referent expectations formats**

1. Considering a "world class" company to be a "7", how would you rate XYZ Company's performance on the following service features?

	Low							High							
Sincere, interest employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
Service delivered right the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7								

2. Compared with the level of service you expect from an excellent company, how would you rate XYZ Company's performance on the following?

	Low				High		
Sincere, interest employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Service delivered right the first time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Combined expectations/perceptions statements**

For each of the following statements, circle the number that indicates how XYZ Company's Service compares with the level you expect:

	Lower than my desired service level			The same as my desired service level			Higher than my desired service level		
1. Prompt Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Courteous Employees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

**Expectations distinguishing between desired service and adequate service**

For each of the following statements, circle the number that indicates how XYZ Company's Service compares with your minimum service level and with your desired service level:

	Compared with my minimum service level XYZ's service Performance is:									Compared with my desired service level XYZ's service performance is:								
	Lower	Same	Higher	Lower	Same	Higher	Lower	Same	Higher	Lower	Same	Higher	Lower	Same	Higher			
When it comes to...																		
1. Prompt service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2. Employees who are consistently courteous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## SUMMARY

Global tourism has experienced remarkable international growth over the last half century. Recently, in 2003, worldwide tourist journeys reached 714.6 million with an annual growth rate of 4.3%<sup>19</sup>. This growth is reflected in an increase in international hotel guest numbers, hotel occupancy rates and expectations of high service quality. However, the growth differs from country to another; the hotel sectors in developed as well as developing countries have opened their doors to international guests with their demands and requirements. In this respect, hotel service quality has become an international delivery feature –the delivery of hotel services to heterogeneous hotel guests coming from dissimilar countries and different national cultures. This variability has increased the difficulty and complexity of delivering good service quality also due to the influence of national culture on service quality. The lack of theoretical and empirical understanding as to how national culture elements affect service quality often adds to this emerging challenge in the hotel sector. Based on this assessment, the research problem field is formulated as follows:

***Service quality in the hotel sector has international and multicultural delivery features and this increases the challenges and problems of delivering improved service quality due to the effects of national culture. This situation contributes to the challenge of understanding how national culture affects service quality.***

In theory, on the one hand; service quality can be viewed as a function of five service provider- customer gaps; information gap, specification gap, performance gap, communications gap and customer gap. The service providers as service organizations have to deal with these service quality gaps in terms of closing or eliminating them. Further, there is a question among researchers as to what these service quality gaps are, how they can be defined, and how they can be dealt with (be closed/eliminated). On the other hand, national culture can be viewed as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the inhabitants of one country from another. Thus, national culture is “a collective phenomenon” as people or members of any collective group share it from the beginning of their lives.

Therefore and in business research, national culture is seen as five dimensions that give rise to different values and beliefs about organizational, managerial and individual behaviors and practices in a country, or any group within this country, such as service providers/ organizations including hotels, hospitals, banks, universities etc. These five cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and long-/short-term orientation) are also manifest in the behaviors of service organization staff members including top managers, middle managers/supervisors and frontline service employees, as well as in the everyday working environment, from the design of the building where customers enter, to the design of employees’ job descriptions, leadership style, policies and procedures, structures and strategies within service organizations.

In this research, the main research objective is to link service quality theory and national culture theory together into one preliminary explanatory model. The general aim is to present a preliminary explanation of how national culture affects service quality, and what insights could be presented to help in improving service quality in the hotel sector. The need for such a model is based on growing theoretical and empirical evidence, which concludes that there is a need for national culture - service quality explanations in order to obtain a better insight into the mechanisms by which national culture dimensions affect service quality elements or gaps. Consequently, the research model has two functions: Firstly, to uncover and conceptualize the

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<sup>19</sup> Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO); data and numbers as collected by WTO 2003.

## Summary

mechanisms by which national culture affects service quality. These mechanisms should describe reasons and consequences behind national culture - service quality relations or links in the hotel sector. Secondly, the model could help hotel providers (managers and service employees) to improve and enhance the service quality in their hotels. However, the need to generalize the new research model still remains and the model also needs to be tested. Nevertheless, the research model provides hotel organizations, managers and service employees, with new insights concerning service quality improvements. The model also provides new ideas for further research.

In order to build the research model, the main research question to be addressed was phrased as follow:

***“To what extent can a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations be built in order to help in improving service quality in the hotel sector?”***

This main research question is rephrased using three sub-questions as follows:

1. What prototype model is appropriate for the assessment of the national culture-service quality relations?
2. How should the prototype model be evaluated in order to achieve a preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations?
3. To what extent is the preliminary explanatory model of national culture-service quality relations theoretically adequate and practically helpful and usable in improving service quality in the hotel sector?

To address the main research question and its sub-questions, an extensive literature review is conducted in Chapter 2 covering both service quality and national culture theories to provide a theoretical background for this research. The initial aim was to develop a prototype model of national culture - service quality relations. To achieve this, a method for theory construction is adopted and applied in Chapter 3. Based on the theoretical background and empirical observations in the hotel sector, a service-provider perspective is adopted in Chapter 4 to build the prototype model. From this service provider perspective it was concluded that of the five service quality gaps (Gaps 1 to 5), only the four provider gaps (Gaps 1 to 4; information gap, specifications gap, performance gap, and communications gap) will be focused on. In terms of the national culture dimensions, only four dimensions were included in the prototype model: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, and long/short-term orientation. Having omitted the both customer gap (Gap 5) and the masculinity/femininity dimension of national culture, the prototype model is presented and illustrated at the end of Chapter 4.

The literature review clearly showed that the Egyptian and Dutch cultures are very different in terms of the four national culture dimensions that were included in the prototype model. Consequently, the prototype model is evaluated within those two national contexts in order to achieve an improved model of national culture - service quality relations. The empirical evaluation of the prototype model is carried out using four progressive hotel case studies; two in Egypt and two in the Netherlands Dutch. In all cases, the empirical data are collected through interviews, direct observations and from documents as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6. The model evaluation process is divided into two rounds of empirical evidence; the first round evaluated the prototype model (M0) in Chapter 5. The second empirical round evaluated an improved model (M1), which resulted from the first empirical evaluation, leading to the preliminary explanatory model of national culture - service quality relations (M2) in the end of Chapter 6.

In Chapter 7, the model is completely presented with its functions. The new model addresses conceptual links between service quality theory and national culture theory in terms of

descriptive mechanisms. Each mechanism involves managers and employees' behaviors issues that can be focused in order to improve service quality in the hotel sector. The mechanisms include: 1) *Hierarchical-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing* 2) *Delivering Service Quality Regulated by Centralized Performance Control* 3) *Functional-Driven Information Gathering and Sharing* 4) *Empowering to Perform in Delivering Service Quality* 5) *Close and Formal-Driven Communication* 6) *Money-Driven Specifying Service Quality* 7) *System Border-Driven Performing* 8) *Open and Informal-Driven Communication* 9) *Guest Satisfaction-Driven Specifying Service Quality* 10) *Guest Satisfaction-Driven Performing* 11) *Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships* 12) *Performance Driven by Group Coherence and Dominance of Relationships* 13) *Guest Relationship-Driven Information Gathering, and* 14) *Participative Leadership-Driven in Setting Service Quality Specifications.*

Chapter 7 also summarizes this thesis with a discussion on the research impacts in terms of theoretical and managerial impacts. At the end, the chapter considers the research limitations and makes some suggestions for further research.

**Key Words:** Service Quality, National Culture, Hotel Sector, Modeling Process.

## SAMENVATTING (SUMMARY IN DUTCH)

Internationaal toerisme groeit stevig in de laatste decennia. In 2003 waren er 714.6 miljoen reizen met een jaarlijkse groei van 4.3%<sup>20</sup>. Deze groei zorgt voor een groter aantal internationale hotelgasten en een hogere bezettingsgraad. Daarnaast stellen hotelgasten duidelijke kwaliteitseisen. Groei verschilt uiteraard in diverse landen. Steeds meer hotels openen hun deuren voor internationale gasten met hun eigen wensen en eisen. De variatie in deze wensen en eisen vergroot de moeilijkheid en de complexiteit om aan kwaliteitsstandaarden te voldoen. Het ontbreekt aan empirische en theoretische kennis over de invloed van nationale cultuur op de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening. Derhalve kan het onderzoeksprobleemveld als volgt omschreven worden:

**De kwaliteit van de dienstverlening in de hotelsector heeft internationale en multiculturele kenmerken. Dit verhoogt de uitdaging om verbeterde kwaliteit van de dienstverlening te verkrijgen. Specifiek wordt gekeken naar de invloed van nationale cultuur op de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening.**

Voor de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening bestaan diverse modellen. Vele modellen bestaan uit verschillende dimensies. In dit onderzoek is gekozen voor een beschrijving in vijf dimensies. Te weten: de informatie dimensie, kwaliteitsstandaard dimensie, prestatie dimensie, communicatie dimensie en de klant dimensie. De dienstverleners gaan om met deze dimensies zodanig dat gepoogd wordt om aan de verwachtingen passend bij deze dimensies te voldoen.

Ook nationale cultuur kent theoretisch diverse modellen. In dit onderzoek is gekozen voor een model met vijf dimensies. Te weten: machtafstand (power distance), omgang met onzekerheid, individualisme/collectivisme, mannelijkheid/vrouwelijkheid, korte en lange termijn oriëntatie. Deze dimensies manifesteren zich zowel bij medewerkers als bij het management van hotels. Ook manifesteren zij zich in bijvoorbeeld de werkomgeving, het design van het hotel, regels en structuren enz..

Het doel van het onderzoek is het vaststellen of er al dan niet een verband is tussen de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening en nationale cultuur. Daarom wordt beoogd een eerste uitleg te geven betreffende invloed van nationale cultuur op de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening. Het ontworpen model heeft twee functies. Ten eerste het beschrijven en conceptualiseren van mechanismen die de invloed van de nationale cultuur op de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening omschrijven. Ten tweede om een eerste aanzet te geven voor het hotelmanagement om de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening met behulp van het model te verbeteren.

De probleemstelling van het onderzoek is:

***In welke mate kan een eerste verklarend model, betreffende de relaties tussen nationale cultuur en de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening, ontworpen en gebouwd worden, zodanig dat daarmee bijgedragen kan worden aan het verbeteren van de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening in de hotel sector?***

Deze probleemstelling is opgedeeld in drie deelvragen:

1. Welke prototype model is geschikt om relaties tussen nationale cultuur en de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening te beschrijven?

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<sup>20</sup> Bron: World Tourism Organization (WTO); data and numbers as collected by WTO 2003.

2. Hoe kan het prototype model geëvalueerd worden opdat een eerste uitleg van de relatie tussen nationale cultuur en de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening kan worden gegeven?
3. In welke mate is deze eerste uitleg adequaat, geschikt en bruikbaar om de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening in de hotelsector te verbeteren?

De vijf eerder genoemde dimensies betreffende de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening zijn op te delen in een tweetal categorieën. De eerste vier betreffen de dienstverlener en de vijfde de klant. In het onderzoek is gekozen om slechts de eerste vier te behandelen, omdat daarmee de nationale cultuur (immers de cultuur van de dienstverlener) voldoende vast ligt. Ook de vijf dimensies van nationale cultuur zijn beperkt tot een viertal, omdat onderzoek naar mannelijkheid/vrouwelijkheid een specifieke studie is.

Aangezien in de literatuur slechts (zeer) beperkt aandacht is besteed aan de relatie tussen nationale cultuur en de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening is case study onderzoek voor de hand liggend. Er zijn vier case studies uitgevoerd: Twee in Nederland en twee in Egypte (gezien het voldoende verschil in nationale cultuur van de dienstverlener). Het model is een matrix-model, waarin veertien mechanismen beschreven zijn, steeds in gedrag van personen. Het model is volledig beschreven aan het eind van hoofdstuk 6. Enkele voorbeelden van de mechanismen zijn:

- Geld gedreven gedrag
- Gasttevredenheid gedreven prestatie
- Gesloten en door regels gedreven communicatie

Met dit model is een eerste aanzet gegeven voor theoretische verdieping van de relatie tussen nationale cultuur en de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening en tevens is een eerste aanzet gegeven om de dienstverlener te helpen de kwaliteit van de dienstverlening te verbeteren.

Kernwoorden: Kwaliteit van de dienstverlening, Nationale cultuur, Hotelsector, Modelleringsproces

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Yasser Al Tayeb was born on November 16, 1974 in Sharkia, Egypt. In 1996, he graduated at the Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration of the Zagazig University (Egypt) with the specialization on Management Sciences. Since 1997, he is appointed as a lecturer at Al-Azhar Cairo University, where he studied and got Postgraduate Diploma in Management and Business Administration. In 2003, he got his Master of Philosophy Degree (MPhil) from the Maastricht School of Management (MSM) the Netherlands. In same year (2003), Yasser started his PhD studies at the University of Twente (UT), the Netherlands in the department of operations, organization & human resources management (OOHR). His doctoral research was on service quality in the hotel sectors with a main focus on modeling the effects of national culture. Yasser's research and teaching interests are: quality management and control, service quality, national culture theory, model building processes and techniques, research methodology and design.