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**Development of Quality Management Assessment and  
Improvement Tools and Techniques Appropriate to  
the Tourism Industry**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**in Tourism Management**



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## ABSTRACT

The thesis researched the development and implementation of a quality measurement and improvement strategy based on a specified combination of two TQM tools - SERVQUAL and QFD. The strategy was successively trialled and refined in three Rotorua based tourist attractions and centred on the appropriateness or otherwise of applying such quality improvement techniques to the small business sector of the New Zealand tourism industry. The significance of the research is outlined in the introductory chapter and related theoretical perspectives are developed in the literature review.

The study researched the following question: How to discover a tool for the measurement and therefore the improvement of the service quality for small to medium sized tour operators? Three case studies were selected to provide the location and data base for the research – one each in the cultural, heritage and environmental segments of the tourism industry. All are well established businesses with good industry and market profiles. The investigations through two complementary case studies have helped to refine the research instrument and supported the implementation of the research methodology in the extensive principal case study. Statistical analyses were employed to compare the reliability of the data from the different surveys and to explain variances in the results.

Research findings indicate that with further refinement and modification through on-going usage, the combination of the two tools would provide the small business operator with a means of linking customer service satisfaction measurement to the underlying operational components of their business. The visitor profiles of the tourist attractions obtained from the surveys can help to explain the reasons for any significant differences in customer expectations in relation to quality service standards. The findings suggest that the combined SERVQUAL and QFD quality management technique should be regularly used by small tourist attractions both as a quality improvement tool to meet customer satisfaction and to assist in the attainment of external quality service recognition.

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