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## Getting deep insight of service quality models

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### Abstract

Customer satisfaction is the only way to remain in business for the entrepreneurs. Service quality is the weapon in the hands of businessman by which they can retain the customers. Service quality is a crucial factor for the success of the business firm; if the service provider is rightly aware about the different dimensions of the service quality then it is easy to make the customers satisfied. The present paper makes an attempt to discuss the various service quality models with reference to pertinent literature.

**Keywords:** Customer satisfaction, service quality, service quality models.

### Introduction

The customer satisfaction has three patrons-Customers, Store and Service Quality. Customer satisfaction has favorable impact on loyalty of customers, reduced costs, higher profits and finally on overall performance of the store. However satisfaction of customers in stores is determined by uncounted factors and because of limited understanding of managers about these factors the efforts made by them towards customers may lead to customer dissatisfaction. Satisfaction means the contentment one feels when he/she fulfills a desire, need or expectation. Furthermore, Customer satisfaction can be a measured by how happy customers are with the services and products of the store. Service quality is a comparison of expectations with performance. Customer satisfaction is based on perceived service quality. Improved service quality will increase the economic competitiveness. Service quality is a crucial factor for the success of the business firm; if the service provider is rightly aware about the different dimensions of the service quality then it is easy to make the customers satisfied. Parasuraman *et al.* (1985) defined service quality as “the global evaluation or attitude of overall excellence of service.”

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) service quality means the customer’s overall judgment of the excellence of the service or the difference between one’s expectation and the actual service performed.

Lewis and Mitchell (1990) asserted in his contribution that service quality is the extent to which a service meets customers’ needs or expectations.

Levy and Weitz (2005) found that customers evaluate the retail service as a difference between the expectations they have and the service they receive. Customers are satisfied when the perceived service meets or exceed their expectations and they are dissatisfied if they receive the service below the expectations.

Ladhari (2009) found that service quality is regarded as the top priority of firms at the present time because it gives the company a competitive advantage. It also helps for future growth and increases efficiency.

### Service quality models

#### ▪ SERVQUAL

There was various service quality models proposed and applied. SERVQUAL is a scale to measure the quality in service sector. It was developed by A Parasuraman, Leonard Berry and Valerio A Zeithaml in (1980). It is multi item scale which was developed to access customer perception of service quality in service and retail businesses. (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeihaml 1988).

This scale divides the service quality in five dimensions. The five dimensions are as follows:

- Tangibles – It includes physical facilities, equipment and staff appearances.
- Reliability – It is ability to perform service dependably and accurately.
- Responsiveness- It includes willingness to help and respond to customer need.
- Assurance- It is ability of staff to inspire confidence and trust with customers.
- Empathy- It is the extent to which caring individualized service is given.

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### Gap in SERVQUAL

This model identifies five gaps which is the cause of poor service quality. It measures the gap between customer expectations and experience. This theory is based on the assumption that customers can find a firm's service quality by comparing their perceptions with their expectations. When the expectations of the customers do not match with the experience, the difference is known as gap. First gap is between consumer expectation and the management perception. Following reasons were identified: wrong demand forecast, poor market research and wrong interpretation of customer's expectations. Second gap is between management perception and specification of service quality. Poor planning, lack of management commitment, ambiguous service design were some of the reasons for gap. Third gap is between service quality specification and service delivery, reasons were identified as deficiencies in human resource policies, failure to match demand and supply. Fourth gap is between service delivery and service communication. Fail to manage customer expectations, fail to perform according to specifications were the reasons for the gap. Fifth and the last gap is between expected service and actual service received.

### ▪ SERVPERF

The measurement of service quality through SERVQUAL was criticized by Cronin and Taylor (1992) and Teas (1993) and they recommended SERVPERF (service quality tool for measuring perceptions only). The major difference between SERVQUAL and SERVPERF scales that SERVQUAL measures service quality by comparing the perceptions of the service received with expectations, while SERVPERF considers only the perceptions of service quality. The SERVPERF scale consists of 22 perception items. Finn and Lamb (1991) tested SERVQUAL in four different types of retail stores, and found that SERVQUAL, without modification, could not be used as an authentic measure of service quality in a retail setting, but they did not offer an alternative measure. (Dabholkar 1996)

### ▪ Retail service quality scale

The need for a measurement instrument for service quality in a retail environment was answered by Dabholkar *et al.* in 1996. For the retail industry Dabholkar, Thrope and Rentz (1996) developed Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS). Based on SERVPERF, RSQS includes 28 items scale, of which 17 items are from SERVPERF and 11 are developed by qualitative research. It has five dimensions. These variables were Physical Aspect, Reliability, Personal interaction Problem solving and Policy of the store. It has been used by researchers in measuring service quality in super market, hypermarket, departmental stores and discount stores in different countries. Kim and Jin (1991) revealed that service quality is not universal across the countries and industries. Carrillat and Mulki (2007) explained that it was agreed that scale need to be modified to be more suitable for the context of study. In Indian context only 26 items are applicable. All the service quality models have their benefits and boundaries. These models should be used considering their applicability conditions and appropriateness.

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