

Service Quality Models: A Review

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Abstract

Service Quality is an area of concern in Management, Tourism & Hospitality. Frequent studies are conducted on service quality. This paper aims to explore the various models of Service Quality that have been used in carrying service quality research by various researchers. This article covers models expanding from conventional personalized services to the internet-enabled services. It also highlights the changes in the process of delivery of services from conventional to internet and technology based services. This would be an interesting paper for graduate students of Management, Tourism & Hospitality and other interested people having inclination for service models review.

Key Words: *Service Quality, Management, Tourism & Hospitality*

The quality of the service is the indicator of guest satisfaction. Crick & Spencer (2011) also believed that a good quality of service from the food and beverage (F&B) department of a hotel is important for many guests. Previous research studies defined service quality solely on the perspective of customers in relation to the concept of consumer-perceived quality. Babajide (2011) asserted that the organizations that offer goods and services to the utmost satisfaction of the guests are the building blocks of such perception. Qu and Tsang (1998), and Zeithaml et al. (1996) defined perceived service quality as the global evaluation conducted by customers pertaining to the overall excellence or superiority of a service.

Parasuraman et al. (1990, 1985, and 1988b), Qu & Tsang (1998), and Zeithaml et al. (1996) developed SQ (service quality) model from the extensive research using which much of the recent research on service quality has been carried out. Service quality is a multi dimensional concept. This paper reviews existing literature about various models for measuring service quality.

Theories and Models in Service Quality

SQ1 : Technical and functional quality model

This model is developed by Gronroos (1984). He introduced three components of service quality:

1. Technical quality: is the quality of what consumer actually receives as a result of his/her interaction with the service enterprise and make a basis for his/her evaluation of the quality of the service
2. Functional quality: emphasizes on the mechanism with which he/she gets the technical outcome. It helps in the formation of his/her views of service being received.
3. Image: is crucial and is built upon technical and functional quality of the service offered circumscribing ideology, pricing and PR.

The consumer satisfaction can only be achieved by matching the expected service and perceived service to each other.

SQ2 : GAP model

This model is developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). It proposed that that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. It is based on gap analysis as:

Gap 1: Difference between consumers' expectation and management's perceptions of those expectations, i.e. not knowing what consumers expect.

Gap 2: Difference between management's perceptions of consumer's expectations and service quality specifications, i.e. improper service-quality standards.

Gap 3: Difference between service quality specifications and service actually delivered i.e. the service performance gap.

Gap 4: Difference between service delivery and the communications to consumers about service delivery, i.e. whether promises match delivery?

Gap 5: Difference between consumer's expectation and perceived service. This gap depends on size and direction of the four gaps associated with the delivery of service quality on the marketer's side. This model is named as SERVQUAL model after being refined by Parasuraman

et al. (1988) with five dimensions named as reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, assurance and empathy. It was further re-revised in 1994.

SQ3: Attribute Service Quality Model

It was developed by Haywood-Farmer (1988). According to it, High Quality of service can only be achieved by meeting customer preferences and expectations consistently. It highlights three basic attributes of services: physical facilities and processes; people's behaviour; and professional judgment.

Each attribute consists of several factors. The researcher tried to map different type of service settings as per degree of contact and interaction, degree of labour intensity and degree of service customization in to this model.

SQ4. Synthesised Model of Service Quality

It is developed by Brogowicz et al. (1990). This model focuses on synthesis of traditional managerial framework, service design and operations and marketing activities. It identifies the dimensions related to service quality in a traditional managerial framework of planning, implementation and control. The synthesised model of service quality considers three factors, viz. company image, external influences and traditional marketing activities as the factors influencing technical and functional quality expectations.

SQ5. Performance only model

It was developed by Cronin and Taylor (1992). The authors analysed the measurement of service quality and its relationship with consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions. They compared computed difference scores with perception to conclude that perception only are better predictor of service quality. They developed performance only measurement of service quality called SERVPERF by illustrating that service quality is a form of consumer attitude and the performance only measure of service quality is an enhanced means of measuring service quality. In particular, they maintained that Performance instead of "Performance-Expectation" determines service quality.

SQ6 : Model of e-service quality

It was developed by Santos (2003). It assumed that the success and failure of electronic commerce can be determined by quality of service offered. Rust and Lemon (2001) defined e-service as the role of service in cyberspace. This study proposed a conceptual model of e-service quality with its determinants. It is proposed that e-service quality have incubative (website design, technology soundness for easy access and website attractiveness) and active dimensions (good support, fast speed, and attentive maintenance that a web site can provide to its customers) for increasing hit rates, stickiness, and customer retention.

Conclusion

An attempt is made in this paper to review various service quality models. There has been more models not included in this paper. The models expand from conventional personalized services to the internet-enabled services. It also highlighted the changes in the process of delivery of services from conventional to internet and technology based services.

The present paper is an attempt to enhance the understanding of the subject. This review of models clearly underlined:

- General service quality model developed with different types of service encounters.
- Improvement of these models with the new situations.
- Modeling based on new concepts (derived out of weaknesses /leanings from the existing models).
- Including new variables/situations with existing models and remodel/ test the findings.

The review of these service quality models addressed various issues, debates, strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the models and suggest areas of service quality improvement concentrating on market, customer preferences, motivated staff, feedback system etc.

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