



A MULTISECTORAL STUDY OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

In today's competitive environment, delivering high quality service is the key for a sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations are facing pressure to deliver quality service to satisfy customers. Customer satisfaction does have a positive effect on an organization's profitability. Intense competition in the retail businesses forces organizations to differentiate their services through quality. Service quality is the difference between the service expectation of the customer and service received by the customer that is service perception. This is why it is essential for the business to identify and measure the key service quality features that will lead to customer satisfaction. The aim of this paper is to study the different dimensions of service quality i.e. Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy & Tangibles etc. The review of service quality literature revealed that the service quality has affected by number of factors which are needed to focus for improvement of service quality. Service quality was measured with a model based on SERVQUAL model.

Keywords: Customers Satisfaction, Service Quality, Servqual Model, Service Quality Dimension, Review of Literature.

Introduction

Nowadays, services are increasingly important to the economy, because service industry has grown significantly. The services sector in India remained the most dynamic sector of the world economy, contributing almost one-third of world gross value added, half of world employment, one-fifth of global trade and more than half of the world FDI inflows. The increasing share of service sector in developed countries has established new ways in creating competitive edge within the delivery of a high level quality service. The consumption of services often involves the personal interaction of consumers and service employees. The consumer's experience within the service process is an important determinant of his/her satisfaction with the service and facilitates his/her assessment of service quality. Service Quality is an important strategy for every organization to survive in the competition in recent era. Because of the inherent nature of the service, customers perceive service quality differs in many ways. For this reason, many organizations consider service quality as a valuable tool since it has impact on organization's strategic and financial performance. India's services sector covers a wide variety of activities such as trade, hotel and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financing, insurance, real estate, business services, community, social and personal services, and services associated with construction.

Research Objectives

Service quality in various service activities has gain a lot of attention from researches and practitioners. In today's competitive environment, any service organization cannot survive successfully without delivering high quality service. The main objective of this research paper is to understand the concept of Service quality and to review the relevant literature. This paper attempts to create a distinct understanding of this aspect with reference to different sectors of services.

Understanding the Concept

Meaning of Service: A service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything." A service tends to be an experience that is consumed at the point where it is purchased, and cannot be owned since it quickly perishes. There is a tremendous market for services in the large scale, medium scale and small scale sector as well. A partial list of services is given below:

Type of Service Operations	Examples
Tranportation Services	Railway, Airlines, Local passenger transportation, Road transportation , Helicopter service, Private aircraft services, Water transportation
Public Utility Services	Gas Supply, Water Supply, Electricity
Communication Services	Telephone, Postal and Courier, Radio and TV broadcasting, Telecommunication, Tele-conferencing, Satellite.
Financial & Insurance Services	Banking, Leasing, Security and brokerage, Investment banking , Retail banking, Insurance, Credit reporting.
Marketing Related Services	Marketing consultancy, Advertising , Tele-marketing , Sales promotion , New product development , New product testing ,Market research.



Education Services	Schools, Colleges, Institutions
Engineering Services	Equipment inspection, Designing, Construction design , Architectural , Facility planning , Technical research , ERP
Beauty & Fitness	Beauty parlours, fitness centres, gyms
Entertainment Services	Motion pictures ,Video Game parlours, Theme parks, Cinema, Event management, Discos .
Medical Services	Nursing homes, dispensaries, hospitals
Business & Professional Services	Management consultancy, Legal , Accounting , Meeting facilities, Office management
Hospitality Services	Hotels & restaurants , Catering , Tourism
Other Services	Security , Public relations, Speech writing , Educational, Training, Travel related , Courier , Interior designing, Laundry and cleaning, Computer programming, Fax , Ware housing , Repair and maintenance .

Meaning of Service Quality: Service quality measures how well a service is delivered, compared to customer expectations. Businesses that meet or exceed expectations are considered to have high service quality. Service quality is nothing but the difference between the service expectation & service actually received by the customer. Customer has certain expectation about the service. If the customer experience the same service as they expect then this difference will be zero and we can say that the service quality is very good. Higher the difference of above equation lower will be the service quality.

Definition of Service Quality

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) and Johnston (1995) defined the service quality in terms of customer satisfaction, that is, the degree of fit between customers expectations and perceptions of service.

Meaning of Servqual: SERVQUAL is a multi-item scale developed to assess customer perceptions of service quality in services This instrument is based on the assumption that the customers can measure a firm's service quality by comparing their perceptions of its service with their own expectations. Parasuraman et al (1985) within the original SERVQUAL model defined service quality using 10 determinants of quality: reliability, responsiveness, competence, credibility, access, courtesy, communication, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Parasuraman et al (1988) reduced those into the following five:

1. **Reliability:** Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
2. **Responsiveness:** Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
3. **Assurance:** Employees' knowledge and courtesy and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
4. **Empathy:** Caring, individualized attention given to each customer.
5. **Tangibles:** Appearance of physical facility, equipment, personnel and written materials.

Literature Review

Many researches have been conducted on service quality concept, its dimensions & its types. Some of the studies related with the sectors of services are analysed below:

Beauty & Fitness

Sumi Azad (2015), researched that among the five factors, four factors have insignificant influence on customers' satisfaction. The beauty parlor should give more concentration on these four factors as well as other factors which the customer consider more important such as beauty parlors service price. And marketing managers in the beauty parlor should focus on assurance, reliability, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness rather than focusing on profit making.

Akter, 2008, Akter 2009, deduced that thousands of beauty care services providers have sprung up all over the country in the last decade as a significance of being beautiful is increasing. At the social level, physical beauty is an advantage as being beautiful gives a person much more confidence.

(Young, 2011), concluded that the beauty services industry in India has been witnessing increased number of international players in which is earlier women centric has started concentrating on male grooming which resulted in unisex salons. The middleclass segment has upgraded their consumption lifestyle and increased their willingness to buy beauty products and services.



Dr. G. Rabia Jahani Farzana and R. Banu Priya (2016), concluded that one of the main reasons for the popularity of beauty salons is the rising disposable income along with the beauty conscious of people. The perception of below 25 years and 26-36 years of people are of opinion that there is necessity of beauty salon and they want to pamper their self. At below 25 years of age group of people have started using beauty services for personal hygiene.

Public Utility Services

Gronroos (2007), in a supportive way, he stated that, perceived service quality as a consumption process in which the customer is part of the service process that leads to an outcome or result.

Ushantha, Wijeratne, & Achchuthan, (2013), Importantly, service quality is widely accepted concept in the world of marketing. Further, as a broadly accepted concept, service quality has the wide range of measurements, which have been discussed by various research findings in the developed and developing countries.

Gowan, Segmour & Ibarrenche, (2001), stated that Providing better level of public services is generally considered as complex process, in which, finding out unexpressed needs, setting priorities, allocating resources and publicly justifying and accounting for what has been done are not easy to fulfill systematically .

S. Achchuthan¹, N. Sivathaasan² & J. M. R. S. Jayasundara, (2014) , Concluded that dimensions of service quality were identified with 21 key variables. Those five dimensions were classified as the first order factors of service quality dimensions of electricity services in Sri Lankan context. These measure tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance. Moreover, factors extracted from the analysis accounted for 62.899 % of the total variability.

Medical Services

Slim Haddad et al. (1998), The author develop a 20 item scale includes three subscale related to health care delivery, personnel and facilities. The author suggests that the scale developed in this study may be tested in other context because the diverse nature of quality changes with the type of work environment, culture and depend on specific context.

Syed Andaleeb (2008), studied the links between service quality and patients satisfaction in the context of health services delivered to children in developing country like Bangladesh. A 20 item representing the assurance, tangibles, empathy , responsiveness, communication ,input adequacy , facilitation payments , and satisfactions ,scale was developed.

G.N.Akhade, Dr. S.B.Jaju, Dr. R.R.Lakhe (2016), observed that most of the studies used SERVQUAL scale to measure the service quality of healthcare services. Health care sector is quite different than other service sectors. In case of bad service in healthcare may result the death of the customer.

Cornelia and Simona (2009), make attempt to present the differences in patients perception on healthcare service quality on a sample of ten Romanian clinics. The author selected three variables namely the perceived competence of physicians, the perceived competences of nurses , and the empathy of the hospital personnel. The results of study shows the patients prefer specialized hospital rather than general hospital.

Hospitality Services

Ekinçi et al (1998) tested SERVQUAL model based on the research carried out in the Turkish sea coast hotels. Their model is based on tangible and intangible determinants of quality.

Stevens et al (1995), basing it on SERVQUAL model, developed a model called DINESERV, which consists of 29 questions, arranged according to 5 determinants of quality in SERVQUAL model.

Gunarathne, U. (2014) ,examined the relationship between Services Quality and Customer Satisfaction in hotel industry of Sri Lanka. It was found that courtesy of attendants, comfort in guestroom, cleanliness and environment of hotel have significantly affected the customers' perception.

Ivana BLEŠIŠ, Andjelija IVKOV-D IGURSKI, Uglješa STANKOV, Igor STAMENKOVIŠ & Milan Bradiš concluded that The results of the research showed that guests are not generally satisfied with hotel services. Their expectations were higher than their perceptions of quality services in all factors, except the factor of "empathy", where the positive value of the gap is the result of low expectations.



Telecommunication Sector

A study conducted by **Aali, A. et al. (2011)** measured the service quality of mobile phone companies operating in Saudi Arabia by using the SERVQUAL instrument. It was found that there was difference in customers' perceptions in almost all the dimensions.

Khan, M. A. (2010) investigated the users' perception of service quality of mobile telephone operators in Pakistan using a questionnaire survey covering SERVQUAL dimensions as well as network quality and convenience as an additional dimensions. Convenience and network quality was found to be relatively most important dimensions.

A research conducted by **Dabhade, N. et al. (2013)** studied the impact of quality of service on customer satisfaction of mobile users by considering the case of Airtel and identified the factors that affect quality of services. This paper also analyzed improvements and measures which were followed up by the Airtel to enhance satisfaction level of their customer .

Debasish Baruah, Thuleswar Nath, Dimpri Bora,(2015), they analysed the impact of service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction in telecom sector. A five point Likert scale was used to take responses from respondents according to their experience.

Financial & Insurance Services

Abdullah, Md. Et al. (2011) identified the service quality gaps in external customer services in private commercial banks (PCBs) of Bangladesh. Also, the most important dimensions of service quality that affect customer satisfaction in PCBs had been found out .

Chelliah, S. et al. (2010) measured the customer satisfaction through delivery of quality service in the banking sector in Malaysia. The study also furnished implications for marketers in banking sector for improvement in delivery of service quality.

Patidar, G., et al. (2013) analysed the service quality of government and private banks in Indore by using SERVQUAL model **Neena Prasad**,concluded that EI is an important factor influencing service quality.Furthermore, the significant relationships identified between EI, relationship marketing and service performance supports the proposition of incorporating EI in to the bank employee-customer service encounter.

Education

E.Thangasamy(2014),concluded that promoting the quality of education and research in Higher Educational System and successful marketing of this service by using ICT in education to satisfy the targeted masses within and outside the country shall alone covert the dreams of today into reality in the days to come.

Brown and Mazzarol, 2009; Chitty and Soutar, 2004, said that Although universities and commercial enterprises are two different streams, literature puts an effort to develop a model, borrowed from commercial settings, in the context of higher education. Therefore, these models do not find cause and effect relationships among some of the variables in the context of higher education sector .

Parves Sultan and Ho Yin Wong(2014), It is well regarded that the dimensions of service quality vary across industries, service types, country and culture, and even by providers. Therefore, conceptualization of service quality is dependent on study perspectives. In addition, the antecedent approach to study service quality in literature is inadequate.

Donaldson and McNicholas, 2004, It has been found that when making the uncertain and high-risk decision of choosing a university, the student looks for evidence of service quality, which confirms its importance in the university's function.

Tranport Services

Krishna Kanth⁵ (1983) in his book entitled "Analytical Study of Nationalised Motor Transport" states that Passenger Motor Transport is a Public utility service and as such it is the duty of a welfare State to provide most economical and comfortable service to the public.

In **Udaya Bhaskara Reddy's (1988)** article on "Metropolitan Transport: On verge of collapse?", the unbalanced growth in vehicle population has resulted in several hurdles, viz., traffic congestion, over-crowding, accidents, pollution, poor traffic management, pedestrian problems, etc. In this paper, an attempt has been made to discuss the transport problems in metropolitan cities in terms of vehicular growth, safety and accidents and environmental pollution.



Christoph Wolff (2001), summarised that Indian Railways must separate tangential areas, such as manufacturing and catering, from its core business of providing logistics service for freight customers and passenger service. However, India has the world's most vertically integrated rail system.

R. Rajeswari (2014), that customers are satisfied with the quality, service and, safety provided by the airlines. Customers are also satisfied with the cabin cleanliness, in-flight entertainment, and the seats comfort in flight. Customers think that they are getting high value for their money and satisfied with the overall courteous & helpfulness.

Marketing Related Services

Prateek Maheshwari, Nitin Seth, Anoop Kumar Gupta (2015), examined the subject of advertisement effectiveness with two perspectives viz. dimensions on which advertisement effectiveness depends and dimensions which are used to measure advertisement effectiveness.

Newman et al. (2004), studied banner advertisement and web site congruity effects on consumer website perceptions and indicated that the advertisements should be consistent with the website brand and certain consumer characteristics should be also be considered.

K. Lees and J. Healey, tested the effectiveness of a mouse pointer image in increasing the click through for a web banner advertisement. Study found that click-through rates for the advertisement varied significantly across the websites which is in contrast with the previous studies. In a study of advertisement effectiveness in context of movies.

C. Russel, tested the effect of different levels of plot connection on brand placements and found that recognition rate for the products of high plot visual placement was higher than recognition rates for the products of low plot visual brand placement.

Entertainment Services

Gummerson (1996) tried to explore the extent of application of relationship marketing in service sector. According to his findings, the service users hold good image of the company if it provides effective CRM services. He found that poor relationship marketing caused discontinuation of services by many customers. The same concept applies to Indian customers too.

Jain and Dhar (2003) studied the determinants of customer relationship management effectiveness in India. They used in-depth interviews focused on behavioural dimensions of relationships. It was found that customer relationship management emerged as a core business process for maintaining and enhancing the competitive edge in modern business affairs.

Sarangi (2007) highlighted the aspect of quality of entertainment service industry in India. The objective was to define the parameters of service quality satisfaction with reference to entertainment services in a metro city. In a survey of 300 people visiting the multi-screen cinema halls, various dimensions of services were found. Customers in metros and other cities have started watching movies in multiplexes which provide excellent ambience and quality.

Nasreen Teher & Swapna Gopalan (2007), concluded that corporatisation, is creating an avenue for better practices bringing about an increased level of professionalism in business and accounting practices and opening up new avenues for this industry to earn revenues through advertising, co-branding and merchandising.

Conclusion

To conclude or in nutshell this study says that the service sector is difficult to define and to encompass. There are a number of ways to identify the sector, its divisions, its industries, and the types of jobs within them. The journals which are analysed are from period 1988-2018. Different types of services are discussed like transportation, banking, education, public utility services, telecommunication etc. An attempt is made in this paper to review the various service quality concepts and various research studies on measurement of service quality of services.

The objective of the present work was to analyse the service quality dimensions in different sectors. It has been concluded that most of the elements which are covered are customer satisfaction, customer perception, marketing, Service Quality Dimensions, customer retention, service delivery. Some more factors can be covered under these studies i.e. Service encounters, service design, service features, service recovery etc. This calls for further research covering these areas.



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