SERVQUAL

Idea In Short

The GAP Model of Service Quality aids in the understanding of customer satisfaction by the organization. The GAP Model is commonly used in the service industry to comprehend the many deviations that occur in the process of providing service to potential clients. The GAP Model creates a roadmap for the total service delivery process and detects the gaps between the processes, ensuring that the entire model runs smoothly. The GAP Model of Service Quality aids in identifying the gaps between what is perceived and what is expected in terms of service quality. In the service delivery process, there are five gaps: the gap between customer expectations and management perceptions, the gap between service quality specifications and management perceptions, and so on

SERVQUAL, also known as The Service Gap Model, was created by a group of authors in the mid-1980s as a way to compare an organization's service quality performance to customer service quality needs. Customers' expectations and perceptions are used by SERVQUAL to assist businesses in identifying strategies to improve the most important concerns. A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry proposed the GAP Model in 1985. The Gap Model of Service Quality is a framework for examining typical customer satisfaction issues that were developed in a 1985 Journal of Marketing paper titled, A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Further Research.

Objective

Consumers today are more demanding than ever before. Customers not only expect a high-quality product, but also a high-quality customer service experience. High-quality customer service is essential for any service-related enterprise, such as mobile networks. Even manufactured products such as Cars, household appliances, mobile phones, and computers cannot achieve a strategic competitive edge just based on their physical products. Customer service is viewed as an integral component of the product from the consumer's perspective, and a firm is obligated to meet those expectations. Many firms are concerned

about providing exceptional value to their customers. This covers not only the physical product but also customer service. In a competitive market, products that do not provide high-quality customer service that matches consumers' expectations will struggle to stay afloat. Measuring the quality of service is an, even more, Herculean task. Consumers can have various perspectives on the same service. For example, a delivery boy's behavior may be friendly to some customers, yet harsh and disrespectful to others. SERVQUAL (service quality gap model) is a gap approach for measuring service quality that may be utilized by managers in a variety of sectors. This model's major goal is to:

- At various phases of service delivery, identify the gaps between consumer expectations and the actual services offered.
- Developing a solution for the observed flaws
- Closing these gaps and improving the quality of client service

The GAP model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985 identifies **5** major gaps that can hamper the service quality.

Gap between Customer Expectations and Customer Perceptions

This gap occurs when management or a service provider fails to understand what the customers want or needs. This can happen due to:

- Inadequate marketing research
- Lack of communication between employees and managers
- Lack of proper market segmentation
- Lack of encouragement for employees to listen to the customers

For example, hospital administrators may think patients want better food, but patients may be more concerned with nurse responsiveness.

Gap between management perception and service-quality specification

This gap occurs when management or a service provider accurately perceives the customer's needs but fails to set a performance standard. This can happen due to:

- Poor service design
- Absence of standards
- Inappropriate physical evidence

For example, hospital administrators may tell the nurses to give "fast" service without specifying speed in minutes.

Gap between service-quality specifications and service delivery

This gap occurs when the employees may be undertrained, unable to fulfil the standards, or unwilling to perform the job with the required standards. This can also happen due to:

- Conflicting standards
- Poor human resource policies
- Failure to match demand and supply

For example, hospital having a set standard of hygiene hired a poorly trained janitor

Gap between service delivery and external communications

Statements made by company officials and advertisements have a significant impact on consumer expectations. The gap occurs when these projected expectations are not fulfilled when the service is delivered. This can happen due to:

- Lack of integrated services marketing communications
- Ineffective management of customer expectations
- Overpromising

For example, a hospital advertisement shows a nice, clean room, but the patient finds it to be cheap and dirty.

Gap between perceived and expected service

This gap occurs when the customer fails to understand the quality of service being provided or misperceives it. The consumer feels that the expectations created by the service provider

were not fulfilled. This can happen due to:

- Wrong customer selection
- Wrong service evaluation parameters

For example, a restaurant manager may visit their customer repeatedly to ensure quality control and satisfaction, but the customer may interpret this as a sign that something is wrong with the service provided by the restaurant staff. Based on this service-quality model, researchers have identified five determinants of service quality. These are described below as per the descending order of importance

1. **Reliability**—Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
2. **Responsiveness**—Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service
3. **Assurance**— Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
4. **Empathy**- Provision of caring, individualized attention to customers
5. **Tangibles** - Appearance of physical facilities, equipment, staff, and communication materials

Advantages

The Gap Model is extremely helpful in determining where a product's service quality is lacking. Here are some of the most compelling reasons to utilize the SERVQUAL approach to assess an organization's level of customer satisfaction.

- **The Universality of the model -** The SERVQUAL model may be utilized in a variety of service settings/sectors and provides a basic skeleton that can be customized to meet the individual characteristics of a company. It can be used in a variety of empirical settings, as well as in different countries and cultures
- **Ease of using the model -** The model is simple to use and may be used regularly to track consumer impressions of a company's service quality in comparison to its competitors. After the data has been examined, it can be visually presented so that strengths and shortcomings in comparison to the competition can be easily identified
- **Analysis based on numerous dimensions -** It allows a company to assess its service quality performance on each dimension as well as the overall dimensions. It

enables the company to divide its consumers into various segments depending on their SERVQUAL scores

- **Proven track record of success-** It is a tried-and-true instrument that may be compared for benchmarking reasons. Because of considerable field testing and refining, it is a statistically valid instrument

Disadvantages

Even though this model has several advantages and is extensively utilized, it has several flaws and criticisms.

- **The model's validity -** The SERVQUAL model's validity as a generic instrument for measuring service quality across various service sectors has been questioned. And that simply revising the SERVQUAL items is insufficient for assessing service quality in various service environments
- **Assumptions made during the model -** The term expectation is polysemic; consumers evaluate service quality using standards other than expectations
- **The model that is Process-Oriented -** The model's gaps are all focused on the process. Regarding the way, the goods or services is supplied. The outcome and how the customer perceives the product would be the focus of outcome orientation

Summary

The Gap Model, also known as the SERVQUAL (Service Quality) model, is used to evaluate an organization's service quality performance to the needs of its customers. The GAP Model was proposed in 1985 by A. Parasuraman, Valarie Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry. It enhances the organization's understanding of consumer satisfaction. In the service business, the GAP Model is often used to understand the numerous variances that occur during the process of providing service to potential clients. It considers five key gaps that can jeopardies service quality. These 5 gaps are Gap between Customer Expectations and Customer Perceptions, management perception and service-quality specification, service quality specifications and service delivery, service delivery and external communications and perceived and expected service. Since its origin, the model has proven its worth, and it is now extensively utilized in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, information

technology, and even construction.