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Case Study   **Management**

The Gap Analysis Of Hospitality Services: A Case Study

* Dr. N. Ramanjaneyalu** Mr. Kiran Koppad

* Assistant Professor, Kousali Institute of Management Studies, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

**MBA Student, Kousali Institute of Management Studies, Karnatak University, Dharwad.

ABSTRACT

The main challenging task for any service providing firm to survive in the present competitive market is to retain its existing customers and to form a new bond with the new customers. Measurement of service quality is necessary to identify the errors in the service provided, which helps the organizations to take the corrective measures, in turn making them to provide good services to their customers. Customers will be having expectations and perceptions for the services provided by the firms. There exists gaps in what is expected and what is delivered and that it alters the perceptions, both for the Customer and the Provider. Understanding this gap and trying to fill it should be the top most priority of any service organization. Measuring the service quality is very important as there is always room for improvement which is very essential to retain existing customers as well as to attract new customers.

Keywords : Gap Analysis, Service Quality.

INTRODUCTION
Service marketing is a function of hospitality sector by which the organizations plan, promote and deliver the services to their customers. The main challenge for any service company to survive in the present competitive market is to retain its existing customers and to form a new bond with the new customers. The relationship between the service provider and customers should be such that the services provided by them should yield fruitful results to both. Service provider requires professional excellence to influence the potential customers and transforming them into actual customers. Services can be provided by many organizations but the service quality which distinguishes the services provider from competitors. Hence different organizations involve themselves in measuring their service quality in different ways to improve service quality to survive and grow in the market.

Measurement of service quality is necessary to identify the gap in the service provided, which helps the organizations to take the corrective measures, in turn making them to provide good services to their customers. Customers expect certain level of quality and perceive certain level of quality based on their knowledge and experience. If expectation and perception differs there exists gap between expected service and perceived service. Understanding this gap and trying to fill it should be the top most priority of any service organization. Measuring the service quality is very important as there is always room for improvement which is very essential to retain existing customers as well as to attract new customers. In order to find the gap between the expectations and perceptions of the customers regarding the service quality, the study was undertaken in service organization.

SERVICE QUALITY
"Service quality is the ability of a service to consistently meet or exceed customer expectation". Customers also form perceptions of service quality during the service transaction - how effectively and efficiently the service was delivered and the speed and convenience of completing the transaction. Finally, customers evaluate support activities that occur after the transaction i.e. post-sale

services. Service quality can also be defined according to both what and how a service is delivered. Gronroos distinguishes between "technical quality" and "functional quality". Technical Quality is concerned with the outcome of the delivered service. Customers use service quality attributes such as reliability, competence, performance, durability, etc. to evaluate technical quality. Functional Quality has more to do with how the technical quality is transferred to the consumer. Service quality attributes such as responsiveness and access would be important in helping the customer judge the functional quality of the service encounter.

Service Quality Challenges: Defining quality for services is more difficult than for products because of the intangible, variable nature of service characteristics. Unlike product quality, consumers frequently lack the necessary information to evaluate service quality. Search quality and experience quality are more applicable to determining product quality. However, with services consumers are usually limited to using credence quality to evaluate the experience, relying solely on the overall credibility of the service provider Service Continuum. Another challenge presented in assessing service quality arises when viewing services along a continuum ranging from pre-sale to post-sale activities

Dimensions of Service Quality:
1. Tangibles: Physical facilities and facilitating goods. Example: cleanliness, furniture.
2. Reliability: Perform promised service dependably and accurately. Example: receive mail at same time each day.
3. Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers promptly. Example: avoid keeping customers waiting for no apparent reason.
4. Assurance: Ability to convey trust and confidence. Example: being polite and showing respect for customer.
5. Empathy: Caring, individualized attention and ability to be approachable. Example: being a good listener.

Gap Model of Service Quality
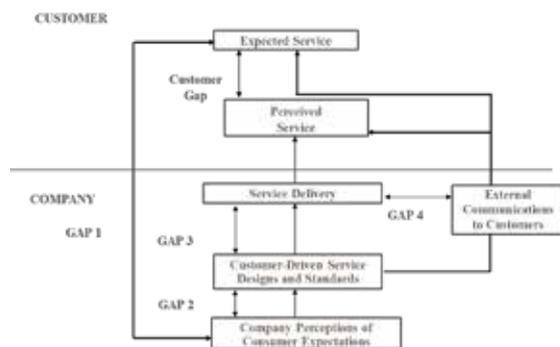
1. Customer Gap: It is the difference between customer's expectations and perceptions.
2. Company Gap 1 (The Knowledge Gap): Not knowing what customers expect.
3. Company Gap 2 (The Service Design & Standards Gap): Not having the right service designs and standards.
4. Company Gap 3 (The Service Performance Gap): Not delivering to service standards.
5. Company Gap 4 (The Communication Gap): Not matching performance to promises.

Closing the gaps:

Gap 1: Learning what customers expects.

Gap 2: Establishing the right service quality standards.

Gap 3: Ensuring that service performance meets standards.

Gap 4: Ensuring that delivery matches promises.

COMPANY PROFILE
The study focuses on hospitality services with reference to Kamat Yatrinias located in Dharwad city. It was established in Hubli in 1948 under the leadership of R. P. Kamat, the family persevered, undaunted by any impediments. Today Kamat Group is a chain of hundred odd vegetarian restaurants and hotels spread over Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Kanrnataka. An offshoot of Kamat Group of Hotels, founded in 1990 S. P. Kamat. In Karnataka today, the Kamat Yatrini-was Group of Hotels with the objective of "Atithi Devobhava" (Guest is God) has become synonymous with delicious food, comfortable accommodation, reasonable pricing and excellent service. For more than a decade, the traveler to South India has been taking a break, whenever he comes across a hotel with a logo. From star hotels to budget hotels to restaurants to drive-in way-side facilities, this group has 18 branches – 16 in Karnataka and one each in New Delhi and Hyderabad.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
1. To study the customers expectation and perception on service quality with reference to Kamat Yatrinivas.
1. To identify the service gap from the customer point of view.
2. To know the firm's performance in meeting its customer's expectations.
3. To understand the satisfaction level of the customers towards the services of the organization.
4. To provide suitable solutions to fill up the service gap.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY
In this study an attempt is made to understand the customers' expectations and perceptions regarding the service quality. Customers' expectations and perceptions were studied using service quality model. The total score of the service quality was found and also at the same time, individual scores for all the service quality dimensions were found. Also an attempt was made to identify the problems in store and pur-

chase departments. The main focus was given to identify the bottlenecks that were occurring in these departments which were causing the increase in consumption level. The study helps the organization to identify the problems and difficulty that are occurring different departments, and guides it to take the necessary steps to tackle the obstructions. Also the study helps to know the firm's performance in meeting its customers' expectations. This will help the organization to improve their performances in certain areas of services and meet the customers' expectations.

METHODOLOGY
Primary Data: Primary data was collected by conducting the survey using structured questionnaire of service quality model with personal interview. The questions prepared were mainly based on the dimensions of service quality, where in each question were given 5 point ratings scale and the customers had to tick any one rating based on their expectations and perceptions for the services provided by the organization.

Secondary Data: The secondary data was collected from secondary sources of information such as website of the company, reference books, and internet.

Sample Size: The total number of customers were randomly selected for survey was 100. The sample size selected includes customers both from restaurant and lodge residences.

SERVQUAL Model for Gap Analysis: The test instrument called SERVQUAL was used to measure the service quality. The first part of the questionnaire asks customers to indicate the level of service they would expect and second part of asks customers to evaluate the service performance. Gap analysis involves calculating service quality that involves subtracting a customer's perceived level of service received from what was expected.

Limitations: The analysis, interpretation and conclusion are drawn from the information collected only from 100 customers, therefore it can't be generalized.

DATA ANALYSIS
Graph-1: Data compiled from survey
Interpretation: Overall average service gap score 0.22; it indicates overall service quality is satisfactory as per the service quality model. From the graph, it is clear that the dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, assurance and empathy have got positive scores. Whereas only one dimension that is responsiveness has got negative score. From the above analysis, we find that the customers have higher perception level than expectation level for all the dimensions except responsiveness. Thus it can be interpreted that the customers are satisfied with good services, facilities, environment, and reliability of service, and empathy of the employees. But at the same time they have higher expectations about responsiveness of the service providers.

Observations: During the survey, customers have given very good responses for the facilities provided to them in the hotel. They have also shown positive response for the room services given to them. It was found that the customers rely very much on the facilities, security and safety measures given to them. Hence the customers told that they want to make their stay whenever they visit next time. The customers are very much pleased with the comforts they are getting and the cleanliness that is being maintained. At the same time the customers have responded that the room boys, waiters and cleaners are very soft and they understand the customer's problems/inconvenience. Hence because of these observations we can say that the dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, assurance and empathy have got positive scores. Also some of the customers responded that they are not getting good response from the workers, which is mainly because of language problem. The reason they gave that the workers are not much literate and they can't understand languages other than Local language. Hence because of these observations

we can see that the dimension responsiveness has got negative score as the expectations are more than perceptions.

Graph-2: Data compiled from survey
ANALYSIS: The average tangible gap score is 0.11. The total score is positive. In tangibility dimension, the attributes such as up-to-date equipments and appearance of physical facilities with services provided are having negative scores of -0.42 and -0.18. At the same time, attributes such as visibility of physical facilities and employee's dress code and neatness are having positive scores of 0.38 and 0.64.

INTERPRETATION: From analysis, it can be interpreted that the customers are having more expectations for the attributes such as up-to-date equipment and appearance of physical facilities with services provided and hence these attributes have got negative scores. This means that the customers want improvements in these attributes. At the same time other attributes such as visibility of physical facilities and employees neatness and dress are having positive scores, this means that the customers are having higher perception level towards these attributes, in other words the customers are satisfied by these two attributes of tangibility dimension. In overall, the tangibility dimension is having positive score, which shows that the customers are having higher perception level than the expectation level.

OBSERVATIONS: During the survey, the customers responded that the employees are very neat and they have very good dress code, which makes the customers feel comfortable to take services from the employees. Also the customers responded positively for the visibility of physical facilities in the hotel. The customers are satisfied with the physical facilities available in their rooms. But the customers responded negatively for up-to-date equipments and appearance of physical facilities and the type of service provided. The reasons such as cleaning equipments are traditional, less number of water purifiers, no wi-fi facility etc. Thus finally it is observed that the customers are very much satisfied at the tangibility dimension of service quality and as a result it has got positive score.

Graph-3: Data compiled from survey
ANALYSIS: The average reliability gap score is 0.08. In reliability dimension, the attributes such as promise of doing in time, sympathetic and reassuring and providing services at the time are having the negative score of -0.14, -0.4 and -0.02. But the other two attributes such as dependability and keeping of records accurately have got positive scores of 0.46 and 0.48.

INTERPRETATION: From the above graph and table, it is clear that the customers are having more expectation level than the perception level for the attributes such as promise of doing in time, sympathetic and reassuring and providing services at the time. Hence these attributes have got negative scores. This means that the customers are not satisfied by these service attributes for reliability and hence they want to have these attributes to be improved. On the other hand, the customers are very much satisfied by the other attributes such as dependability and keeping of records accurately and hence they have higher perception level than expectation level. Hence these attributes have got positive scores. In overall, the reliability dimension is having positive score, which shows that the customers are having higher perception level than the expectation level.

OBSERVATIONS: During the survey, the customers responded that they got promises that they will be getting everything by certain time. No doubt the customers got there work done, but they were not done in time as promised. The customers responded that sometimes the workers are not sympathetic and reassuring especially during night hours. The assurance will be given but is not done at that time, but done in the morning and because of these things, the customers responded that they are not getting services at the time they are promised. Hence we can see that these attributes have

got negative scores. But at the same time the customers are very much satisfied with dependability of service on customers and the accuracy of keeping their records. Hence we can see that these attributes have got positive scores. In total it was observed that the customers are satisfied with the reliability dimension of service quality and hence it has got positive score.

Graph-4: Data compiled from survey
ANALYSIS: The above graph indicates average score of -0.41 for responsiveness dimension of service quality. The total score is negative. The attributes of responsiveness such as prompt service from employees, willingness to help, response to the requests promptly are having negative scores of -0.82, -0.74, -0.12. And the only attribute of responsiveness i.e. exactly when services will be performed is having positive score of 0.06.

INTERPRETATION: From the analysis, it can be interpreted that the customers are having higher expectations for the attributes such as prompt service from employees, willingness to help, response to the requests promptly and hence these attributes have got negative scores. But for one attribute i.e. exactly when services are performed, the customers are having higher perception level and hence this attribute has got positive score. In general we can say that the service attributes of responsiveness, which have got negative scores, have not satisfied the customers and the one with positive score has at least satisfied the customers to some extent. In overall, the responsiveness dimension is having negative score, which shows that the customers are having higher expectation level than the perception level.

OBSERVATIONS: At the time of survey, the customers responded that they did not received prompt services from the employees especially during night hours, because of this the customer felt that the employees are not willing to help them and they thought that the customer's requests are not responded properly. Thus the customers are not satisfied with these attributes of responsiveness dimension. Hence the customers have higher expectation level for these attributes and also they want these attributes to be improved. For other attribute i.e. exactly when services will be performed is not informed and hence the customers have higher perception level for this attribute. Finally it was observed that the customers are not satisfied with the responsiveness dimension of service quality and hence it has got negative score, which is the area for concern.

Graph-5: Data compiled from survey
ANALYSIS: the average score of 1.17 for the assurance dimension of service quality. The total score is positive. All the attributes of assurance such as trust of employees, safety in transactions, politeness of employees and adequate support from the hotel to its employees are having positive scores of 1.42, 1.1, 0.9, and 1.26.

INTERPRETATION: From the above analysis of assurance dimension of service quality, it can be interpreted that the customers are having greater perception level for all the attributes of assurance dimension. There is no expectation level or it is totally absent for the attributes of assurance dimension. Hence it can be interpreted that all the service attributes of assurance dimension have highly satisfied the customers and as a result, all of them have got positive scores. Overall it can be interpreted that the assurance dimension is having positive score, which clearly shows that the customers are highly satisfied and hence they are having higher perception level.

OBSERVATIONS: During our survey, the customers responded that they are having high trust on the employees and workers as they were not touching any things without the customer's permission even at the time of cleaning of rooms. Even small piece of paper was not touched without the customer's permission. The customers also felt that they were safe in transactions as the records for each and everything

was kept correctly. The customers also responded that the employees are very much polite. The reasons they gave was that the employees were getting good support from the hotel. Hence because of these qualities, the customers are highly satisfied for the service attributes of assurance dimension of service quality. As a result, the customers are having higher perception level for assurance dimension and hence it has got positive score.

Graph-6: Data compiled from survey
ANALYSIS: the average score of 0.18 for the empathy dimension of service quality. The total score is positive. The attributes of empathy dimension such as personal attention by employees and customer needs known to the employees, are having negative scores of -0.16 and -0.54. Whereas the attributes such as individual attention by firm, firms interest at heart and operating hours convenient to customers, are having positive scores of 0.36, 0.16 and 1.06.

INTERPRETATION: From the above analysis it can be interpreted that the service attributes of empathy such as personal attention by employees and customer needs known to the employees, are having negative scores, which shows that the customers are having higher expectation level for these attributes. The customers are not satisfied by these attributes and hence they want to have them to be improved. Thus, as a result of higher expectation level, these attributes have got negative scores. On the other hand, the customers are having higher perception level for the attributes such as individual attention by firm, firm's interest at heart and operating hours convenient to customers. Thus it can be interpreted that the customers are satisfied with these attributes and hence they have higher perception level for them. As a result these attributes have got positive scores. In total, the empathy dimension of service quality is having positive score, which shows that the customers are having higher perception level.

OBSERVATIONS: During the survey, customers responded that no doubt the firm is giving individual attention to all who comes for the stay. But after the customers start staying in the lodge, personal attention plays very important role. The customers responded that they are not satisfied by the personal attention given by the employees. No doubt the services are offered, but offered delayed. The employees also don't know what might be the needs of the customers who come to their lodge. Because of these things the customers have higher expectation level from the attributes such as personal attention by employees and customer needs known to the employees. The customers are satisfied with the attributes such as firm's interest of the customers at heart and operating hours convenient to the customers. Hence the customers are having higher perception level for these attributes.

SUGGESTIONS TO FILL OVERALL SERVICE GAP
The responsiveness dimension is having very less score of -0.45, which is negative. Hence it shows that customers are not satisfied with the service attributes of responsiveness dimension. Hence it is suggested that focus is to be given to this dimension. The organization has to tune this dimension so that it increases the perception level of customers.

The other dimensions such as reliability, tangibility, empathy, assurance, all are having positive scores of 0.76, 0.105, 0.176, and 1.17. This shows that all the customers are satisfied with these service quality dimensions. Hence the suggestion for these dimensions is that the organization should continue maintaining the same service standards and care should be taken that they are not affected in future. Also some improvements can be bought in the service attributes of some dimensions, which are having lower scores so that the overall score should increase and cross score of 2.0.

From analysis the total score for the service quality dimensions was found to be 1.22, which is positive. This shows that the organization is maintaining good service quality standards for all the dimensions except for responsiveness dimension,

where lot of attention is needed. If it is taken care, the score will increase to 3.0. Hence the suggestion is that the present service standards have to be continued and at the same time, it should take improvement measures for responsiveness dimension, if done so the total score will increases and the organization can become hotel with star standards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TANGIBLE GAP
The attribute such as up-to-date equipment and appearance of the physical facilities with the type of services provided, have got negative scores of -0.42 and -0.18. Hence improvement in these attributes is required. The suggestions for the improvement of these attributes will be like having up-to-date equipments and the services should be provided such that they should be in appearance with the physical facilities that are visible.

The attribute such as employees dress and neatness and visibility of physical facilities have got the positive scores of 0.64 and 0.38. The suggestion for these attributes is that the same service standards have to be continued and the standards have to be improved every time they are provided this will increase the individual scores, which will add to the total score.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RELIABILITY GAP
The attribute such as sympathetic and reassuring, promise to do something by a certain time, and providing services at the time as promised to do so, all have got the negative scores of -0.4, -0.14 and -0.02. Hence improvement in these attributes is required. The suggestions for the improvement of these attributes will be like the employees have to be very sympathetic and reassuring, and the employees have to be trained to do something in time when they promise to do so to the customers, the organization has to practice things like providing the services in time to its customers as it promises to do so. If all these attributes are improved then they will be converted to positive scores as customers will be satisfied.

The attribute such as keeping records accurately and dependability, have got the positive scores of 0.48 and 0.46. The customers are highly satisfied with these service attributes and hence the suggestion is that the service standards for these attributes should be continued same. They have to be improved further to increase the individual score, which will add to the total score.

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONSIVENESS GAP
The attribute such as not realistic to expect prompt service from employees, employees don't always be willing to help, and response to requests promptly, all have got the negative scores of -0.82, -0.74, and -0.12. Hence improvements in these attributes are required. The suggestions for the improvement of these attributes will be like training the employees so that the customers would feel realistic to expect prompt services from employees, training employees such that they should be always willing to help the customers and respond to the customers properly. If all these attributes are improved, then they will be converted to positive scores as customers will be satisfied.

The attribute such as shouldn't be expected to tell exactly when services will be performed has got the positive score of 0.06. The customers are highly satisfied with this service attributes and hence suggestion is that the service standards for this attribute has to be maintained same. It has to be improved further to increase the individual score, which will add to the total score.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSURANCE GAP
The entire attribute such as trust of employees, adequate support from firm to employees, safety in transactions, and politeness of employees, all the service attributes have got the positive score of 1.42, 1.26, 1.1, and 0.9. The customers are highly satisfied with all the service attributes and hence all have got positive score. Hence the suggestion is that the same service standards have to be maintained and contin-

ued.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPATHY GAP

The attribute such as Needs and personal attention, both have got the negative score of -0.54 and -0.16. The customers are not satisfied with these service attributes and hence they have got negative scores. Hence improvements in these attributes are required. The suggestions for the improvement of these attributes will be like the organization should know what are the needs of the customers and try to fulfill at that moment if the customers prefer to have, and the employees should give personal attention when the customers after booking the room and starts staying in the hotel. If all these attributes are improved, then they will be converted to positive scores as customers will be satisfied.

The attribute such as operating hour's convenience, individual attention, and interests at heart have got the highest score of 1.06, 0.36 and 0.16. The customers are highly satisfied with these service attributes and hence they have got positive scores. The suggestion for these service attributes is that the same service standards have to be maintained and continued. They have to be improved further to increase the individual score, which all will add to the total score.

Among all the service quality dimensions, assurance is the only dimension whose all service attributes is positive and hence it has got positive large score of 4.68. If all other service dimensions want to get positive large score than all the service attributes of all the individual service dimensions have to be improved and provide good services. If it is done so then all the individual service quality dimensions will have large positive score, which in turn adds to the total score of overall service quality model.

CONCLUSION

No study is complete without a conclusion. From the findings of the study it is very much clear that the customers are satisfied with all the dimensions of the overall service quality except for responsiveness, where in lot of improvements is to be brought for the service attributes. The customers are having

high perception level than the expectation level, which is a good symbol for the organization as the services provided by the organization have been well perceived by the customers. The customers are very much satisfied by the service quality given by the organization. Hence it was found that the total score for the service quality to be positive. The main reason for why the customers are satisfied is because of tangibility, reliability, assurance and empathy dimensions where the organization is giving good services. In the analysis it was found that the organization is having very good score for assurance as the customers are satisfied for all the service attributes of this dimension. At the same time in the analysis, it was found that the dimension responsiveness has got negative score and this is the area where improvement is needed. If this area is improved, then the organization will be having positive score in all the service quality dimensions, which all together add to the total score, which may become more in future than presently found. Because of its service quality, the customers are having the perception of star hotel for the organization. During the study, it was found that some bottlenecks within different departments are causing hindrances in the growth of the organization. If the bottlenecks are well solved, then the organization can attain a healthy status.

Finally from the study it can be concluded that even though the organization is having positive score for the dimensions such as tangibility, reliability, assurance and Empathy, it has to focus on to the responsiveness dimension as the customers are not satisfied by the service standards provided for this dimension. No doubt the organization is performing very well in other four service quality dimensions, if it wants to attain the star hotel standard, it has to improve its responsiveness dimension of the service quality. At the same time, the bottlenecks arising within the departments have to be focused upon. If these are properly done then the organization can get the status of star hotel.

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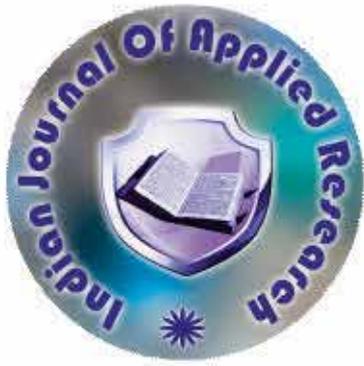
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