Research Issue

Chronology of Service Quality Research:

"Table-1 About Here"

Table-1: Chronology of Service Quality Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>RESEARCH ISSUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Anderson, et al</td>
<td>Recognised importance of selection as priority for obtaining and retaining customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Churchill and Surprenant</td>
<td>Service satisfaction is similar to attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Gronroos</td>
<td>Significance of processes and outcomes in defining service quality. Alluded to satisfaction as being similar to attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Lewis and Booms</td>
<td>Also noted significance of processes and outcomes in defining service quality. Difference in service quality and attitude is seen as general, comprehensive appraisal of some specific product or service</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Holbrook and Corfman</td>
<td>Defined perceived quality as a global value judgement</td>
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<td>1985</td>
<td>Maynes</td>
<td>Viewed service quality as the extent to which a product offers the characteristics that individual desires</td>
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1985 Parasuraman, et al. Established ten service quality determinates known as SERVQUAL: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding/knowing the customer, and access.

1988 Parasuraman, et al. After substantial factor analysis and testing, reduced the ten service quality determinates in SERVQUAL to five: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness.

1988 Zeithaml, et al. Noted that firms not only have a difficult time delivering a consistent level of quality service, but had difficulty understanding what service quality really entails. Perceived service quality as an attitude. Found through focus groups that good service quality as meeting customer expectations.

1989 Babakus and Manzgold Developed serious reservations about SERVQUAL’s scales: reliability and discriminant validity.

1990 Bitner Found perceptions of service quality more closely approach customer evaluations of services provided.

1992 Cronin and Taylor Found that perceptions of service quality were measured by SERVQUAL.

1992 Howcroft Noted customer preferences of service quality based upon comparison between expectations and actual service performance.

1993 Teas Found interpretation of SERVQUAL determinates was flawed.

1993 Brown, et al. Questioned whether five key dimensions capture all possible determinants of service quality.

1994 Parasuraman, et al. Disagreed with Brown, et al. Research supports disconfirmation as valid since it allows service providers to establish gaps in provided service.

1994 Cronin, Jr. and Taylor Found fault with SERVQUAL and developed SERVPERF based upon consumer satisfaction exerts stronger influence on purchase intentions that does service quality.

1994 Taylor and Baker

1996 Dabholkar, et al. All used multi-item measures to ascertain overall service quality with factors as antecedents.

1996 Spreng and Mackoy

1996 Buttle Questioned face validity and construct validity of SERVQUAL.

2000 Dabholkar, et al. Found perceptions and measured disconfirmation are more advantageous than computed disconfirmation.

2000 Bahia and Nantel Devised measurement system modifying SERVQUAL to examine specific service context on a 6-dimension scale called BSQ. Researchers admitted BSQ had limitations.


2000 Oppewal and Vriens Used integrated conjoint experiments to measure perceived level of service quality to avoid measurement pitfalls of SERVQUAL.

2001 Newman Acknowledged acceptance of SERVQUAL, but questioned composition of sample and insensitivity to customer.

Churchill and Spreng (1982) were among the earliest to hold the view later shared by others and were the first researchers to see the significance of attitude as a principal factor leading to superior service quality.

A year after this significant research, Lewis and Booms (1983) concluded that satisfaction was similar to attitude, and consequently noted the significance of processes and outcomes in defining service quality. In addition, they did not directly state, rather they alluded to satisfaction as being similar to attitude. The difference between service quality and attitude is that service quality is seen as a general, comprehensive appraisal of some product or service.

By contrast it was noted by Gronroos (1982) that service marketing had followed two distinctly different paths. In his view, based on empirically reliable research, service when taken alone is indeed physically intangible. It does not matter if it is an airline service or a restaurant service; service occurs when someone does something for the customer in either case. He concluded that the act of something being done for the customer was the significant element in satisfying the customer, and this act did not have to involve a person performing the act rather it was simply a matter of the firm relying upon physical or technical resources doing something for the customer with the customer cooperating by consuming the service.

Holbrook and Corfman (1985) expanded on the concept of an act being performed and defined perceived quality as a global value judgement. They indicated that quality does by its nature seem to express general approval.

Maynes (1985) took a different approach by bringing service quality back to the earliest held views that service quality was the extent to which a product offers the characteristics that the individual desires. He differed from the earlier views in that he saw quality as a normative concept that could equip the consumer function effectively in the marketplace. Additionally, he felt that quality could best be measured and defined using quality as a weighted average of characteristics. This added element of mathematical measurement of quality was the earliest attempt to quantify service quality.

Maynes’ attempt to quantify service quality paved the way for the development of some of the most significant measurement techniques. Parasuraman, et al. (1985) sought to improve the previously developed methods by developing a set of firm characteristics that could be measured by providing the first complete set of ten service quality determinants, which after substantial factor analysis and testing were reduced to five: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Parasuraman, et al., 1988).

Zeithaml, et al. (1988) noted that firms not only have a difficult time delivering a consistent level of quality service even though it improves the profit level for firms providing services, but also understanding specifically what service quality really entails.

Bitner (1990) held the view that perceived service quality was similar to attitude. She noted that customer focus groups universally found good service quality as meeting the expectations of the customer.

Conclusion:

The common element that can be derived from the numerous researchers is that various methodologies exist which allows service quality to be measured. Additionally, it could be measured from several perspectives. The greatest area for dispute is what constitutes the best and most accurate method for measurement of service quality. While the issue is sometimes clouded, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a consensus among the various researchers with
regard to service quality.

REFERENCE