A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

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Abstract

This paper discusses approaches used in understanding customer satisfaction and identifies what customer delight is. The paper starts with psychology in understanding human behaviors and includes Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and relationship dynamics. The paper discusses the role of expectations and how customers are influenced by these expectations; and how these expectations change according to various sources.

The paper further analyses reasons behind satisfaction, and answers the question "What is Satisfaction?"

The following section of the paper concentrates on customer delight and the importance of customer loyalty and the Return on Investment (ROI). This section examines delight according to various authors.

The paper re-examines SERVQUAL Model and its importance, including the Common Measurement Tool (CMT) and the Critical Incident Technique (CIT).

Furthermore, the paper takes into consideration the design of questionnaires and their measurements. This section also highlights the importance of data collection methods namely: Third party telephone surveys, Direct Mails, Emails and Automated Post Calls.

The paper ends with conclusion, tables, and Bibliography.

Keywords: Customer Delight, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Relationship Dynamics, Paradigm Logic, Ipsos Loyalty's Delight Analysis, SEVQUAL Model, Third Party Survey, Common Measurement Tolls, Critical Incident Technique, Automated Post Calls.

Introduction

As stated by (Hanna, 09/23/2002), humans interact with a product or service with an outcome in mind. Using an in-depth research and data collection methods, researchers are able to form a thorough understanding of customers' wants, needs, tasks, perceptions, and behaviors. In order to understand customer's needs and wants, the researcher needs to collect customer's data like recordings, transaction records, registration data, call centre logs, and survey responses are the raw materials. The data is then integrated into models, frameworks, and matrices that tell the stories. Once the model is complete, it is named and labeled and put them in modern-day contexts of interaction. These data are then converted into project plans and the digital and physical products and services. During this iterative user-cantered process, the data is further categorize, prioritized, hypothesized, and validated ensuring that it succeeds. At every step, the customer is accounted for efficiency, feasibility, and fitness. At this stage, the corporation predicts a future interactive dialogue with a customer and then put a measurement plan in place to track, refine, and continuously improve it.

The power of delighting on a regular basis is not to be underestimated, as consumers strive for pure comfort in the Western world. In many cases, customers suffer through pre- and post-purchase disappointment to enjoy the daily use of a product or service like satellite TV service, automobiles, home internet service etc. These products and services fundamentally satisfy the consumer, but contain a periphery of annoyance and inconvenience. However, in a company whose core values and brand platform are based on respect for each individual customer, their core business would be designed around each individual customer. Its products and services would be empathetic to the customer's every state, exploiting the customer's capacity for insight, curiosity, and perception. The customer's needs are met, and the company is a trusted friend, one that inspires, enlightens, and challenges the customer when appropriate.

Moreover, corporations should strive to delight customers regularly, to achieve a higher plane of customer connection. This is potentially accomplished, when a company:

- Demonstrates that it knows and understands the customer
- Anticipates the customer's questions and provides satisfactory answers without them needing to ask.

- Communicates with the customer using a heightened degree of respect, tolerance, and empathy
- Maximizes the customer’s capacity for insight, curiosity, and perception, creating the desire to engage
- Recognizes connections or relationships of value to the customer
- Provides pleasant surprises
- Intelligently personalizes the customer’s experience based on their past needs, behaviors and purchases.

What is more, recognizing opportunities to delight and then designing those potential experiences is difficult. It requires a deeper immersion in and understanding of the lives for those customers that a corporation design goods and services. Performing task analysis, defining behavioral models, and understanding wants and needs of the customer are the foundation.

1. Psychology of quality

According to Prof. Daniel K. Judd, (Dan99), psychology plays a significant role in the process of quality, both within the organization and in the relationships the organization has with its customers. W. Edwards Deming (Deming, 2007), on the other hand, included "psychology" to one of the four elements what he described as "profound knowledge". These four elements namely: (1) Theory of Knowledge, (2) Knowledge of Variation, (3) Systems Thinking, and (4) Psychology, must not to be separated, but instead integrated and understood as interdependent measurement of a greater whole. Researchers have shown that traditional methods of attempting to control behavior through incentive or reward systems are inadequate.

The **traditional** use of psychology was implemented in a behavioral perspective, which focused on the "control" of employee and customer behaviors in order to achieve the goals of the organization. In the traditional organization, management identifies the goals and the work that needs to be done to accomplish such objectives. Incentives and rewards are then assigned to the employee, according to achievements. As the employees do the work necessary to achieve the rewards and incentives, the goals will theoretically, be achieved. While the organization identifies and provides the right incentives, it gains the support of customers, which are needed to carry on for the organization.

From a **practical** perspective, markets are changing so quickly that it is difficult to change incentives soon enough to respond to current market demands. The resistance of most individuals and organizations to these changes worsens the problem. External incentives like merit pay, grades, competition are a classic form of "extrinsic" motivation, which has been demonstrated to have serious flaws.

Quality is essentially a function of human psychology. Ignoring the psychological aspects of human beings, in pursuit of quality, leaves us with a mechanistic understanding quality. To understand the psychology of quality, it is important to begin with a definition of quality. The American National Standards Institute/American Society of Quality Control (ANSI/ASQC) of quality brings us closer to a definition, which was also stated by Joseph Juran (Juran, 1993) quality means “fitness for use”.

The definition of quality was based on the five elements of quality, and according to Judd (Judd, 1994), quality can be defined as: "*Quality is an on-going process of building and sustaining relationships by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling stated and / or implied needs”.*

Looking at these five characteristics of quality and their fulfillment from a theoretical perspective, it is consistent with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, that is: 1) Physiological, 2) Safety, 3) Social, 4) Esteem, and 5) Self-actualization.

The diagram below shows the Maslow hierarchy of needs, and psychological implications.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

(Dani, 2010)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with psychological implications:

Five Dimensions of Quality	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	Dimension of Psychology	Motive for Action	Deming's Cycle
5. Value Sharing	**Actualization**	Integrative	Internal Desire	Aim
4. Inter-connectivity, Paradigm	**Esteem**	Co native (Intuitive)	Intrinsic Rewards	Plan
3. Relationships Systems	**Social**	Affective (Emotion)	Extrinsic	Act
2. Measurement	**Safety**	Cognitive (Mental)	Incentive	Study
1. Experience	**Physiological**	Behavioral (Physical)	Fear; Power Greed	Do

(Judd, 1994)

Moreover, by widening, the psychological focus allows the marketer to concentrate on the customer and employee needs and put these needs into a common vision. To achieve this broadened focus, the marketer have to take into consideration the higher needs, and ensuring that lower level needs are also satisfied in this process. For example, by helping employees and customers to become partners and participants in the process of meeting their needs moves the marketer from a behavioral to a social level. As employees become full participants, they engage in actualization through contributing their own core competencies to the common good that becomes their common vision. It is this participation level, which brings quality to its highest fulfillment. Thus, quality becomes more than simply satisfying a physical, mental, or emotional need. Additionally, **relational dynamic** helps to see the quality as more than just a "give and take" process in which for instance, I give something of value in exchange for something of equal value. However, to delight customers is not that they are getting more than they paid for, but that corporations builds relationships with customers in a way that they become a supporting members of the organization. Thus, customers themselves would begin to giving more back than it is required, by means of making repeat purchases or becoming dedicated, long-term employees. It is only at this level, the value sharing level, that the highest needs of esteem and self-actualization reach their fulfillment. It is at this level where both the responsibility and response-ability dynamics are operative.

In contrast, **Empowerment,** as stated by Blanchard et al. (Blanchard, 1996), refers to: "*an increasing the spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities"*. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities. Empowerment is fundamental in today's globalization, where traditional hierarchical corporations simply are unable to deal with the fast changing market demands.

Likewise, **Paradigm logic** encourages the behavior. According to William (William, 1898), pragmatism is: "*an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that impractical ideas are to be rejected."* The way an individual, family, corporation or country, perceives the world will greatly influence how they think, feel and behave. For that reason, a shift in paradigms can create a significant shift in attitude and behavior. An organization, which exists in a "competition" paradigm, will experience resistance with its customers and suppliers over price, while an organization operating under a value-sharing paradigm could very well adjust the price to meet the needs of all concerned.

2. The Role of Expectations

As indicated by (Thomson, April 2002), the service quality school view satisfaction as a predecessor of service quality, which is a satisfaction with a number of individual transactions falling into an overall attitude towards service quality. On the other hand, the academics maintained that satisfaction is an assessment of service quality that leads to an overall attitude towards the service. It is clear, however, that expectations play a central role in both.

The model that has underpinned the satisfaction approach is the disconfirmation theory, which was claimed by Oliver (L, 1980), suggesting that customer satisfaction with a service is related to the size of the disconfirmation experience, where disconfirmation is related to the person's initial expectations. The theory maintains that if experience of the service greatly exceeds the expectations clients had of the service then satisfaction will be high, and vice versa.

(a) The formulation of expectations

In order to understand expectation, it is imperative to understand how they are formed.

The graphic below outlines the key factors most commonly seen to influence expectations:

Sources of Customer Expectations

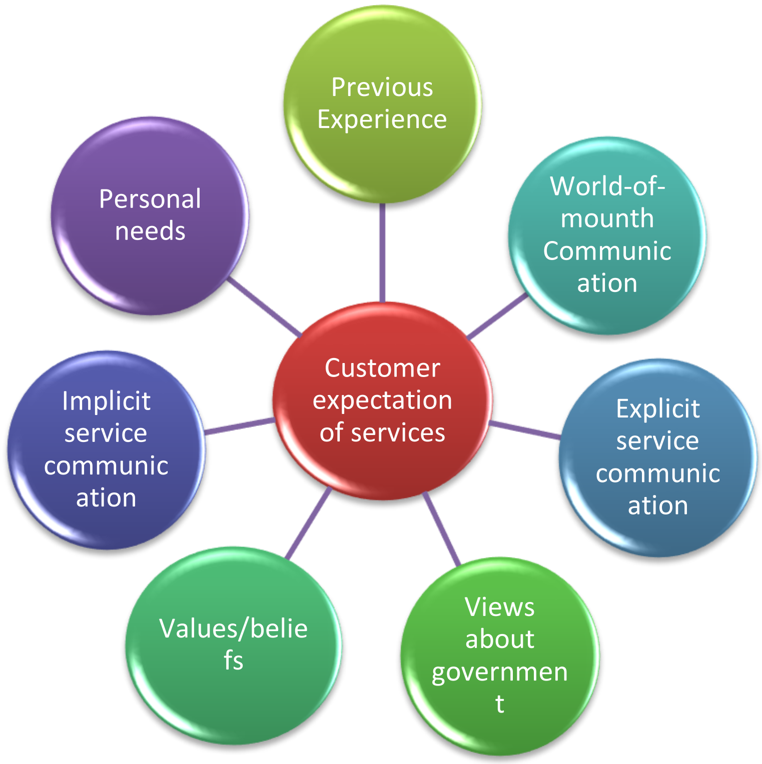
(Parasuraman et.al, 1990)

The diagram shows five influence elements. These elements are described as follow:

1. **Personal needs**: any customer or user of a service will have what they regard as a set of key personal needs that they expect the service to address. These will vary from service to service and from customer to customer. A clear understanding of these needs is necessary to design an appropriate service.
2. **Previous experience:** customer's previous experience with a service or goods will in part influence their future expectations of the service. This further, can include their experience of the service in question, but also of other services, for instance, in public services, expectations will be influenced by experience of similar private services.
3. **Word of mouth communications**: where the expectations will be formed by communications from sources other than the service provider itself. This can include family, friends and colleagues, but more widely the media and other organizations, such as audit agencies.
4. **Explicit service communications:** these represent statements from staff or from leaflets or other publicity material, which can have a direct impact on expectations.
5. **Implicit service communication:** this includes factors such as the physical appearance of buildings e.g. renovation may lead the customer to expect other service aspects to be of higher quality.

What is more, it is central for private and public corporations to weight the impact of customer expectations on their reputations of brand image. Studies had show that there is a wider impact on the brand image on public sector than for private sector. In particular, the expectations of public services can be influenced by views of government and politicians. This relates to what people view as the role of public services, reflecting their dual role as clients and citizens. The revised model of key factors influencing expectations of public services is therefore:

Sources of Customer Expectations



(Thomson, April 2002)

Accordingly, expectations have a central role in influencing satisfaction with services, and a very wide range of factors in turn determines these expectations. This becomes particularly important to understand when we make comparisons between services or monitor change over time.

As stated by Wendy (Thomson, April 2002); "a *negative preconceptions of a service provider will lead to lower expectations, but will also make it harder to achieve high satisfaction ratings, where positive preconceptions and high expectations make positive ratings more likely"*. For instance, a negative reputation of a service or goods is often viewed as causes for users to look at the service more negatively and therefore lower the expectation.

3. What is satisfaction?

According to Yoshido (Kondo, December 2001), customers complain when they are dissatisfied with a product they have bought or about a service they have received. This means that the absolute number and/ or percentage of complaints can be the indicators of customer dissatisfaction. A company's ultimate goal is to reduce the number of customer complaints to zero (Kondo, 1995). For that reason, by reducing customer dissatisfaction the company would achieve no complaints. However, it is important to recognize that eliminating dissatisfaction is not always the same as achieving satisfaction. To achieve customer satisfaction, something more is needed. In order to attain customer satisfaction, corporations must not only achieve the highest quality by eliminating defects but also provide our products and services with excellent attractive qualities. Exceptionally when the lifetime of products is decreasing due to the increasingly rapid development of new products on the market, it is becoming more and more important to cope with the competition in quality by achieving zero defects right from the start of the new production runs.

4. Customer Delight

Ipsos Loyalty's Delight Analysis (Group, 2009), provides an analytical process that copes with the inherent non-linearity of satisfaction data to accurately identify opportunities to first eliminate dissatisfaction and then to create delight.

In line with Isos Loyalty's Delight Analysis, it has been argued by Vavra et.al. (Vavra, 03/2005), that a functional performance (i.e. how the business conducts itself), is non-linearly related to the satisfaction of customer experience, as satisfaction is nonlinearly related to the suggested loyalty.

The Chart below shows the Delight response curve:

(Vavra, 03/2005)

The chart shows for instance, that most firms operate in a central region of the Delight Curve, that is, in a region called the Zone of Mere Satisfaction. Here, performance improvements in are not accompanied. On either side of this central zone, satisfaction's response to changes in performance is much more dynamic, creating two very elastic regions in the Delight Curve. The first zone, starting at the origin, is identified as the Zone of Pain. In this region, the business is performing badly causing substantial dissatisfaction among its customers. Any improvement in performance, no matter how small, raises satisfaction levels. On the right hand side of the curve is the Zone of Delight, where customers are satisfied with the product and services. In this region, increases in performance will also trigger relative increases in satisfaction. It is essential that a business understand where it lies on its own Delight Curve given its current level of performance. Without this understanding, the business will lack a realistic expectation of the consequences of its improvement activities, for instance, the return on investment (ROI) will be difficult to prove.

a. Understanding Customer Delight

As stated by the IPSOS (Group, 2009), many satisfied customers leaves at a high rate in various industries. As satisfaction alone does not transform into loyalty, corporations must provide 100 percent customer satisfaction and even delight to achieve the kind of loyalty they desire.

Current studies showed that customers who have experienced service failures would feel annoyed or victimized. Although victimization was experienced at a deeper emotional level than irritation, both can result in outrage.

Schneider and Bowen (Bowen, October 15, 1999) have focused their generalization on people's needs rather than on customer expectations of their interactions with a firm. The authors proposed a complementary needs-based model for service businesses that assume customer delight and outrage, which begins with the handling of three basic human needs, that is: (1) security, (2) justice, and (3) self-esteem. The authors re-casted a situation in which a customer's needs were violated. This re-casting demonstrated that customers would show an emotional outcome like an outrage to a loss of one of their needs like for example justice. The authors described each need and offered specific managerial tactics for avoiding outrage and creating delight. Companies must make sure that they show concern for their customer needs in all actions, including the activities of the back office (e.g., billing, shipping), not just front office personnel who are in direct contact with the customer.

5. Identifying priorities for improvement

As mentioned by Prof. Wendy (Thomson, April 2002), there are a various models that provide a complete understanding of the service quality, illustrating that all needs have to be improved in order to improve the customer's perception of a service. There are five approaches explained, namely the (a) "**Gap**" approach, the (b) **Matrix Approach**, (c) **Qualitative System Analysis**, (d) the **Common Measurement Tool**, and the (e) **Later Constructions** like the Monitoring Service Quality.

The quality **(1) "gap" approach**, was most associated with the work of Parasuraman et al (Grewal, 1985), and resulted in the **SERVQUAL tool**. The SERQUAL tool has undergone a number of revisions and refinements by these researchers and others. It has been widely criticized but it still forms the starting point for most reviews of satisfaction and service quality.

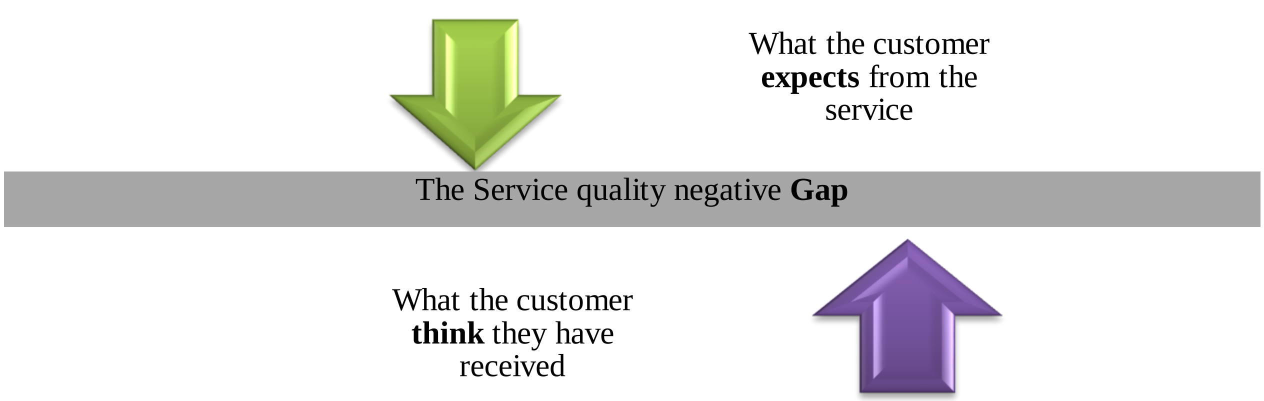
(a) SERVQUAL Model "Gap" Analysis

The basic gap analysis model used in **SERVQUAL** has three distinct elements:

1) Ratings related to what an ideal or excellent service should have
2) An evaluation of how an individual service provider performs on this; and
3) Assigning a weight to how important the top-level dimensions are in determining overall satisfaction.

The model gives rise to the proposition that the gap (**G**) for a particular service quality factor is: **G = P (Perceptions) – E (Expectations).** The diagram below illustrates the Service Quality Gap.

Service Quality Gap Diagram



(Thomson, April 2002)

A negative gap (as shown in the diagram above) implies that customer expectations are not met and the larger the gap, the larger the gulf between what the customers wants and what they actually receive.

SERVQUAL researchers developed the five dimensions of service quality measurements. The description of the five dimensions is as follow:

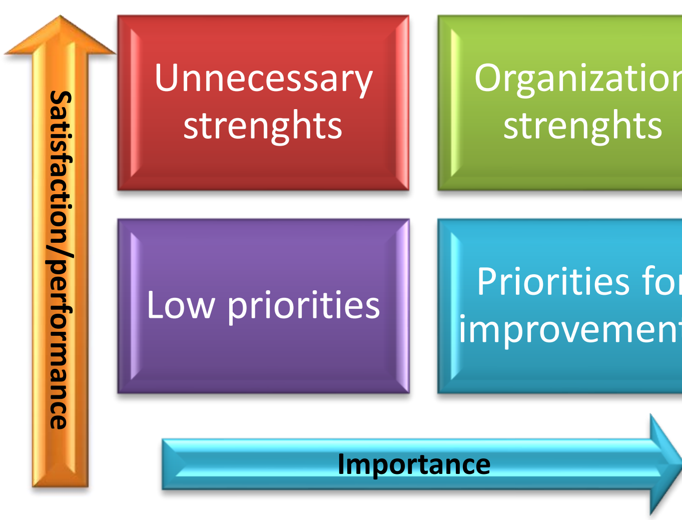
Dimension	Description
1) Tangibles	The physical facilities and equipment available, the appearance of staff; how easy it is to understand communication materials
2) Reliability	Performing the promised service dependably and accurately
3) Responsiveness	Helping customers and providing a prompt service
4) Assurance	Inspiring trust and confidence
5) Empathy	Providing a caring and individual service to customers

Corporation should strive to fulfill all these five dimensions in order to enhance their service quality.

(b) Matrix approaches

Another means of measuring satisfaction level of the service is the matrix approach, which is divided into four types of factors, namely: (1) unnecessary strengths, (2) Organization strengths, (3) Low priorities, and (4) Priorities for improvements; with those that fall into the priorities for improvement quadrant being the focus for action.

Satisfaction/Performance versus Importance Diagram



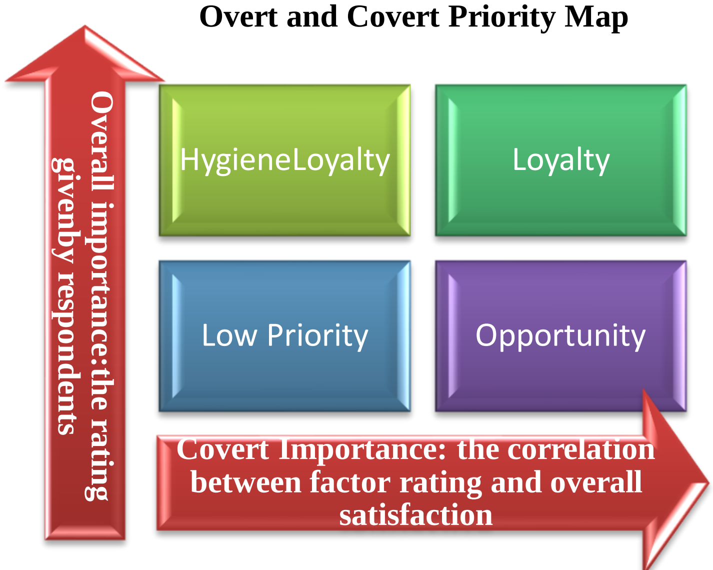
(Thomson, April 2002)

The chart outlines the meaning of the most important services to users ration against a measure of their satisfaction with each. The four quadrants show the average satisfaction and importance scores. The two left hand quadrants contain less important services. The top right hand quadrant contains those services, which users are satisfied with, and the bottom right shows those services users are not satisfied. These not satisfied services are viewed as priorities for improvement.

(c) The **Qualitative System Analysis (**QSA) model, developed by Gallup (Inc., 2/2/1993), does not ask about the importance of issue directly, but rather derives importance through reason analysis and multiple regression stages. The multiple regressions then relate all the aspects to a measurable overall satisfaction. The mixture of direct questioning and regression techniques provides a deeper understanding of customer priorities. For example, Grogan and Smith (Grogan, 1997), showed that direct questioning can lead to an over-emphasis of "hygiene" factors (i.e. those that are necessary to be performed to an adequate standard, but where performance above this level does not lead to increases in perceptions of the service).

In contrast, overt behaviors are those that anyone can observe, while covert behaviors are those that only the person can examine. The comparison of overt and covert importance results in the following quadrant:

Overt and Covert Priority Map



(Grogan, 1997)

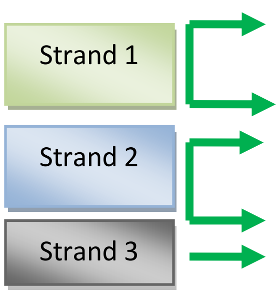
In this model, the quadrants have the following meanings:

Hygiene Loyalty – are related to for example, to characteristics that are important to get it right, but not necessarily to go beyond the acceptable standard

- **Loyalty issues** – these issues are related to customer's commitment to the business as service levels are increased.
- **Low priority issues** – for instance, features that require only low service maintenance, and where only extremely low standards will affect views of the service.
- **Opportunities** –this can add distinctive value to the service, such as, to go beyond meeting expectations to delighting customers.

What is more, overt and covert priority map model is mainly used in the private sector, where loyalty and repeat purchasing are key measures of success.

(d) The Common Measurements Tool (CMT), is the result of an extensive study by researchers at the Canadian Centre for Management Development and others (Faye Schmidt, December 1998), which examined a number of approaches to standardizing measurement of customer satisfaction with public services. The model they have developed provided a useful example of how elements of different approaches can be combined to improve our understanding of satisfaction and highlight priorities for improvement. The model incorporates five main questioning approaches methods:



1) Expectations of a number of service factors;
2) Perceptions of the service experience on these factors;
3) Level of importance attached to each of a number of service elements;
4) Level of satisfaction with these elements; and
5) Respondents' own priorities for improvement.

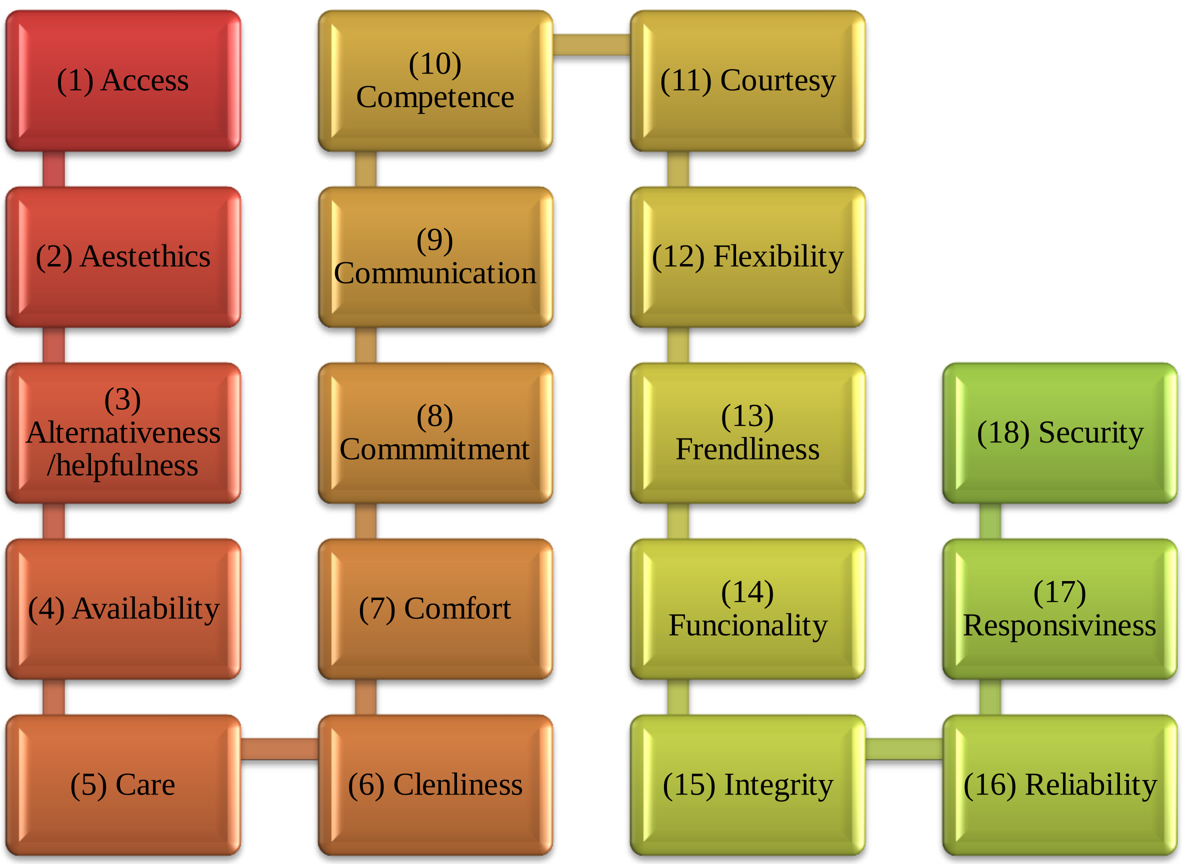
The approach is therefore, made up of three distinct strands. The measures of expectations and perceptions of the service experience, is **strand one,** and it tend to focus on a relatively small number of very specific factors, such as how long customers wait to be served etc. This allows the gap analysis approach through comparing expected service quality with experience.

The **second strand** involves asking levels of satisfaction with a more extensive list of elements, followed by **strand three** by asking how important each of these aspects is to respondents. This allows the comparison of satisfaction and importance those results in the quadrants.

(e) Later constructions

Another method of monitoring service quality was designed by Johnston (Johnston, 15/4/1997), which was based on the study in the banking sector, outlining a list of 18 quality causes, and the diagram below shows the process of monitoring service quality.

Monitoring Service Quality



(Johnston, 15/4/1997)

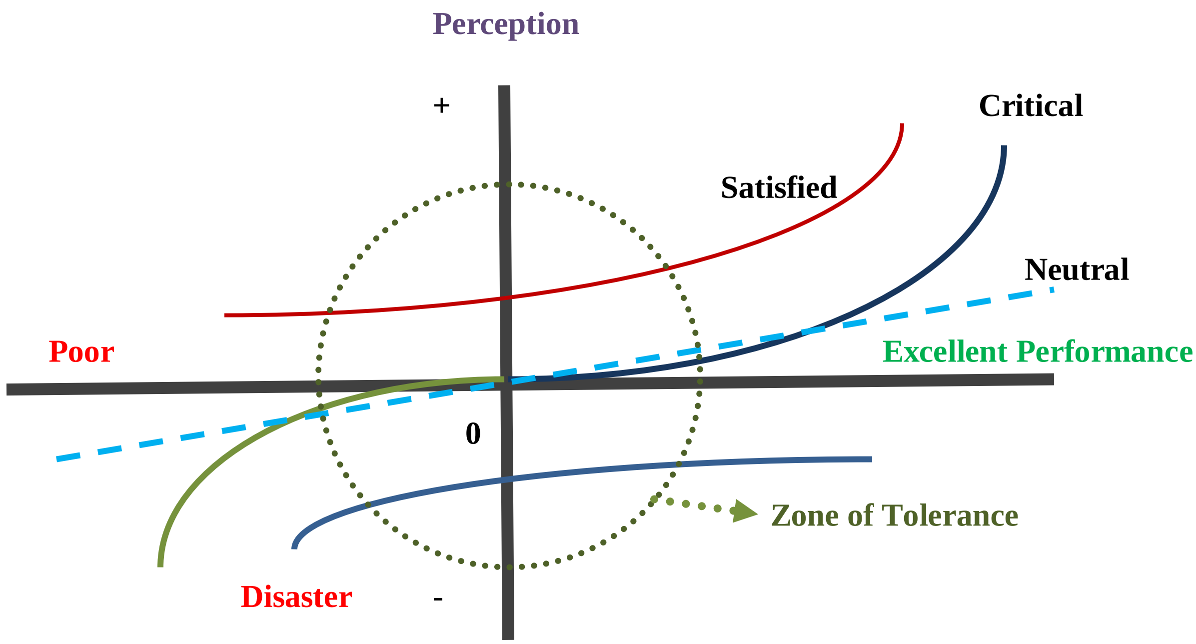
What is more, to identify Service Quality Factors, Johnston (Johnston, 15/4/1997), outlined the **Critical Incident Technique (CIT),** which involves asking service users (in focus groups or through structured questionnaires), if they have experienced any particular incidents or service transactions that have made them very dissatisfied of satisfied with a service. Those that have answered the question were further asked to describe the incident fully in their own words. These answers were then coded by the researchers into generic service quality factors that were then reflected in questions in a full survey of customers.

6. The Importance of Factors in Delight

Quality factors in delight are split into four main categories, and these are:

1. **Dissatisfies** (or hygiene factors): these are either (1) inadequate and/ or (2) adequate. If such factors are perceived to be inadequate, then dissatisfaction will result, but any increase in performance above satisfactoriness has little effect on perceptions. For example, a fork in a restaurant with a small amount of food on it; the presence of a dirty fork is likely to make customers dissatisfied, but a very clean fork is unlikely to add to satisfaction.
2. **Satisfiers** (or enhancing factors): are those factors which, when improved beyond satisfactoriness, have a positive effect on perceptions. For instance, if a waiter does not remember you from your last visit to the restaurant you are unlikely to be dissatisfied, but if he does and also remembers your favorite wine, you are likely to be delighted.
3. **Critical** (or dual threshold factors): factors are both satisfying and dissatisfying. For example, a speedy service from your waiter can delight, but a slow service can lead to dissatisfaction.
4. **Neutral**: these are least sensitive to changes in performance.

The diagram below shows the types impacts on satisfaction level and the zone of tolerance.



(Johnston, 15/4/1997)

The diagram above, shows the **"zone of tolerance"**, highlighted with a dotted circle, where changes in service provision have little impact on the perceptions of the service. The zone of tolerance illustrates that customers are willing to absorb some positive or negative disconfirmation of expectations before expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

The model suggests that once outside the zone of tolerance there could be an conflicting impact on perceptions, that is, a relatively small change in performance could have a large impact on how the service is viewed. What is more, individuals who in the past received low levels of service will as a result have low expectations and in turn will be satisfied with levels of service that would be unacceptable elsewhere.

Moreover, if expectations change over time, either through a change in the make-up of customers, or through a more general change in expectations across groups, different ratings will not necessarily reflect changes in performance.

7. Type of scale and questionnaire design

According to Friedman and Amoo (Hershey H. Friedman, Winter, 1999), to measure overall attributes on verbal rating scales comprises of six attributes namely:

- **Satisfaction scale** ('How satisfied are you with ….?') with the response choices being 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', 'dissatisfied', and 'very dissatisfied'.
- **Performance scale** ('overall how would you rate…). With choices such as 'very good', 'good', 'fair' etc.
- **Expectations scale** ('Overall, compared with what you expected, how would you rate…') with choices such as 'much better than expected', 'better than expected', 'about as expected', etc.
- **Improvement scale** ('indicate the amount of improvement, if any that is needed') with choices such as 'none', 'slight', 'some', 'much', and 'huge'.
- **Compared to the ideal scale** ('Compared to the ideal …, how you would rate …?') with the response choices being: 'very good', 'good', 'fair', 'poor', and 'very poor'.
- **Recommend scale** (How likely are you to recommend …. to a friend') with the response choices being 'very likely', 'likely', 'neither likely nor unlikely', 'unlikely', and 'very unlikely'.

Additionally, a study by Friedman and Friedman, (Friedman, 1997), showed that these six types of rating skills all measured the same underlying construct.

(a) Numeric rating scales

According to a study carried out by: Vera Toepoell, Marcel Dasl, and Arthur van Soest (Vera Toepoel1, 2009), respondents would choose an answer options with low numbers less often compared to the reference level without numbers.

If numeric scales are used, a care needs to be taken in deciding on the type of numeric scale. For example, in a study which compared responses to a scale that ran from 0 to 10 versus one that runs from –5 to +5, the 0 response in the former was interpreted as 'not successful', while negative values were seen as 'failure.' Therefore, results that are more favorable were seen using a –5 to +5 approach than 0 to 10.

Thought should also be given to the number of points on any scale. Generally, the more points were used, the more reliable the results, as fewer points on the scale encourages respondents to treat the alternatives more as discrete rather than continuous variables. However, using too many points can obviously lead to more variation without necessarily increasing precision. The literature therefore suggests using any number from 5 to 11 point scales.

(b) Context effects

Context effects are also particularly worth considering when designing questionnaires on customer satisfaction. These occur when overall ratings are preceded by questions that may influence the respondent. For example, a research by Fienburg and Tanur (Tanur, 1989), found that respondents were more likely to be negative about welfare if they had earlier been asked questions about fraud and waste in government spending.

8. Data Collection Methods

A large number of studies have been conducted, and most generally support the view that face-to-face research is most successful in reflecting the population. There are a number of postal studies that do achieve high response rates; returns around 50% or more are achievable with sufficient follow-up work. The methods used to collect data are as follow:

(a) **Third-Party Telephone Surveys** are conducted by specialized companies and offer a number of advantages. Firstly, individuals trained in the art of conducting interviews perform the surveys. Secondly, the surveys can be lengthy, allowing the call centers to explore topics of the moment like campaign awareness and the impact of various marketing initiatives on purchasing behavior. Thirdly, interviewers will ask questions in the correct sequence and probe for open-ended responses. The major drawback to using this method for post-call surveys is cost. Traditional telephone surveys cost an average of $30 per respondent. Agents are typically paid substantially more than part-time interviewers are, and they do have responsibilities other than conducting interviews. At least 400 interviews for each time period and market segment are needed to produce reasonably reliable information. Even at that level, measured customer satisfaction could vary from the actual by 4 percentage points or more in either direction at the 95 percent confidence level. Costs of quarterly surveys can reach $60,000 per year, when factoring for analysis, tabulations, and fieldwork. Additionally, call center personnel must be prepared to invest considerable time with the third-party survey company to extract the call list and help design the survey instrument. With the prevalence of answering machines, private numbers and cell phones, response rates are little better than direct mail. Because of this, approximately seven names and numbers are needed for every one completed interview, or 2,800 contacts for each customer segment and time period. In addition to the high cost, suspect accuracy, and business risk, traditional surveys take much too long to execute and analyze. Finally, there is no way to track back scores to individual agents or events, making quality monitoring and coaching opportunities difficult to identify.

(b) **Direct Mail** is cost-effective and is widely used by contact centers. However, direct mail is the most imprecise survey method. Direct mail is slow. It typically takes several weeks to complete the analyzed, and it is practically impossible to relate a specific response to a specific agent. Although the cost of printing and distributing the mailers is low, the cost of administering these surveys is not. Each completed form must be manually entered into the analysis software and each open-ended response carefully transcribed and categorized. Finally, mail surveys have to be short, or people will not complete them. This means that contact centers cannot adequately explore the factors that drive customer satisfaction. The resultant data is useful for establishing benchmarks but has little diagnostic value.

(c) **Email** surveys can be executed quickly and economically. These surveys may contain a questionnaire in the text of the message or include a link to a web survey, which can incorporate skip patterns. Additionally, email surveys can be tied to a specific agent interaction. Responses to email and web surveys can be automatically tabulated, and they are the least expensive of the methods available. However, there are two serious problems with this approach. First, most companies do not include email addresses in their customer databases, and when they do, the addresses may be out of date or inaccurate. Customers are unwilling to provide email addresses because of the prevalence of spam. Like the direct mail method, email and web surveys must be brief and to the point.

(d) **Automated, Post-Call**, is also known as: **Sears IVR surveys** (GreatBrook, 2010); where customer satisfaction data could be viewed in real time, tied to specific agents, be highly reliable and consistent and cost a fraction of traditional third-party surveys. Besides providing up-to-the-minute results on customer satisfaction, management can better pinpoint the causes of deviations and use the tool for general marketing purposes, such as campaign evaluations and testing new products and services. Survey systems can also be integrated with caller identification data. This allows for deep analysis of how customer satisfaction levels relate to customer metrics such as ZIP code, purchase frequency, call frequency, payment habits, credit limits, and other customer data that may reside within the enterprise.

With integrated, premise-based solutions, the survey software is linked to the call centre's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. The IVR is a technology that automates with the telephone callers. Before the customer is connected with an agent, the IVR asks the caller if he/she would like to participate in a survey after the call. Typically, the customer is instructed to press one for "yes" and two for "no. Alternatively, the agent may ask the caller during the call or at the conclusion if he wishes to participate in a survey. In that case, the agent executes the hand-off to the survey engine. A third approach is to front end the call with a recorded message offering an invitation and instructions on how to launch the survey before the caller disconnects.

Callers respond via entries on the touch tone pad. In the case of premise-based solutions, the actual questions and response choices are determined by the call center using administration tools provided by the vendor. Moreover, according to the **Incoming Calls Management Institute** (ICMI, 2006), the response rates are a very respectable 20 to 30 percent, and the cost is a fraction of more popular methods like in-house and third-party telephone surveys.

9. Conclusion

As Huitt (Huitt, 2004), stated, "*there is much work still to be done in the area of customer delight or customer satisfaction before we can rely on a theory to be more informative than simply collecting and analyzing data*".

Attempting to understand how improvements in particular service factors may affect satisfaction remains an important consideration, as it can help focus resources on priorities for improvement that will have the greatest impact on perceptions. In realistic terms this will be based on previous research and our understanding of the service, and could be further explored through qualitative techniques, examination of complaints and compliments.

In addition, it is equally important to reveal the questions of who the customers are and what is satisfaction. Therefore, the company's main goal is to reduce customer dissatisfaction by improving their quality in both goods and services.

What is more to measure service quality, researchers tend to use various methods like Service Quality Gap Diagram, Matrix Approaches, Qualitative System Analysis, Common Measurement Tools, Monitoring, and Service Quality. One of the best way to use numeric scales are to use points from -5 to +5 scales, which would accumulate a more favorable results.

Likewise, to collect data, researchers may opt for one or more combination of the following tools such as Third Party Telephone surveys, Direct Mails, Emails, and Automated Post Calls.

Furthermore, research in the field of customer satisfaction can be very important to parents, educators, administrators and others concerned with developing and using human potential. It provides an outline of some important issues that must be addressed if human beings are to achieve the levels of character and competencies necessary to be successful in the information age.

I. Tables

Table 1: Johnston's 18 Quality Causes;

1) Access:	**The physical approachability of service location, including the ease of finding one's way around the service environment and the clarity of route.**
2) Aesthetics	Extent to which the components of the service package are agreeable or pleasing to the customer, including both the appearance and the ambience of the service environment, the appearance and presentation of service facilities, goods and staff.
3) Attentiveness/helpfulness	The extent to which the service, particularly of contact staff, either provides helps to the customer or gives the impression of interest in the customer and shows a willingness to serve.
4) Availability	In the case of contact staff, this means both the staff/customer ratio and the amount of time each staff member has available to spend with each customer. In the case of goods, availability includes both the quantity and the range of products made available to the customer.
5) Care	It concern, consideration, sympathy and patience shown to the customer. This includes the extent to which the customer is put at ease by the service and made to feel emotionally (rather than physically) comfortable.
6) Cleanliness/tidiness:	The cleanliness and the neat and tidy appearance of the tangible components of the

	service package, including the service environment, facilities, goods, and contact staff.
7) Comfort	This includes the physical comfort of the service environment and facilities.
8) Commitment	Staff's apparent commitment to their work, including the pride and satisfaction they apparently take in their job, their diligence, and thoroughness.
9) Communication	The ability of the service providers to communicate with the customer in a way he or she will understand. This includes the clarity, completeness, and accuracy of both verbal and written information communicated to the customer and the ability of staff to listen to and understand the customer.
10) Competence	The skill, expertise and professionalism with which the service is executed. This includes the carrying out of correct procedures, correct execution of customer instructions, and degree of product or service knowledge exhibited by contact staff, the rendering of good, sound advice, and the general ability to do a good job.
11) Courtesy	The politeness, respect and propriety shown by the service, usually contact staff, in dealing with the customer and his or her property. This includes the ability of staff to be unobtrusive and non-interfering when appropriate.
12) Flexibility	It measures the service worker's willingness to amend the nature of the service to meet the

	needs of the customer.
13) Friendliness	This is the warmth and the personal approachability of the service provider, mostly of the contact staff. This includes the cheerfulness attitude and the ability to make the customer feel welcome.
14) Functionality	This relates to the serviceability of service facilities and goods.
15) Integrity	The honesty, justice, fairness, and trust with which customers are treated by the service organization.
16) Reliability	The reliability is related to the consistency of performance of service facilities, goods, and staff. This includes punctual service delivery and an ability to keep to agreements made with the customer.
17) Responsiveness	Responsiveness measured the speed and timeliness of service delivery. This includes the speed of throughput and the ability of the service providers to respond promptly to customer requests, with minimal waiting and queuing time.
18) Security	Security measures personal safety of the customer and his or her possessions while participating in or benefiting from the service process. This includes the maintenance of confidentiality.

(Johnston, 15/4/1997)

SERVQUAL Service Quality Determinants

	Determinant	Example
1	**Access**	
	the ease and convenience of accessing the service	Neighborhood offices; one stop shops; convenient operating hours; 24 hour telephone access; internet access
2	**Communication**	
	keeping customers informed in a language they understand; listening to customers	'plain English' pamphlets and brochures; communication material tailored to the needs of individual groups (ethnic minorities, visually impaired etc); suggestions and complaints systems
3	**Competence**	
	having the skills and knowledge to provide the service	all staff knowing, and able to do, their job
4	**Courtesy**	
	politeness, respect, consideration, friendliness of staff at all levels	staff behaving politely and pleasantly
5	**Credibility**	
	Trustworthiness, reputation and image	The reputation of the service in the wider community, staff generating a feeling of trust with customers
6	**Reliability**	

	provide consistent, accurate and dependable service; delivering the service that was promised	Standard defined in local service charters; accuracy of records; accuracy of community charge bills; doing jobs right first time; keeping promises and deadlines
7	**Responsiveness**	
	being willing and ready to provide service when needed	Resolving problems quickly; providing appointment times
8	**Security**	
	physical safety; financial security; confidentiality	Providing services in a safe and secure manner
9	**Tangibles**	
	the physical aspects of the service such as equipment, facilities, staff appearance	up-to-date equipment and facilities; staff uniforms
10	**Understanding the customer** knowing individual customer needs; recognizing the repeat customer	Tailoring services where practical to meet individual needs

(Jonston, 1995)

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