

Assessment of Service Quality in Diagnostic Laboratory using SERVQUAL Model

Ch Srinivasa Rao

Research Scholar, Bharatiar University, Coimbatore.

Received: July 14, 2018

Accepted: August 20, 2018

ABSTRACT

Measurement of Quality in services is an important aspect of business but also highly subjective. The complications arise because of different parameters available for comparison. This study aims to measure service quality in a diagnostics service provider. The measurement was carried out using a questionnaire based on SERVQUAL model proposed by Parasuraman et al and suitably truncated and modified.

Keywords: SERVQUAL, Diagnostic Services.

Introduction

Service quality is an important aspect of customer service. This is especially true in the case of service industry where there are no tangible products.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined service quality as “the gap between customers’ expectations of service and their perception of the service experience”. The Gap Model, first developed by Parasuraman and his colleagues, is considered as a pathbreaking work done on measuring service quality. The model focuses on the differences between customers’ expectations before availing the service and their experience after having availed the service. The model motivated several researchers to study service quality constructs by adapting the parameters across various services like hotels, financial services, medical services, retailing etc. The work of Parasuraman et al. (1988), stressed the importance of service quality leaning on multi-dimensional factors. A big advantage of the SERVQUAL model given by Parasuraman et al was that it provided an opportunity to easily understand the service quality components.

In the healthcare industry, many of the acute and chronic cases require the services of a diagnostic center which have become an integral part of the treatment. The proliferation of diagnostic services have made the business landscape for diagnostic services intensely competitive. Hence the focus has shifted from plain diagnostic services to service quality. Customer perception of the diagnostic services is a strategic tool that can be used by the diagnostic services to gather a larger market share of those seeking diagnostic services.

Review of Literature

Brown and Swartz (1989)² had studied gap client expectations and client experiences, client expectations and professionals perception of client expectations, client experiences and professionals perception of client experiences in medial services. The study was conducted based on the parameters suggested in SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. The study revealed that there are significant gaps between professional’s perception and client expectations and experiences.

Qatari and Haran (1999)¹ had studied the service quality in health care institutions in Saudi Arabia and identified the components of healthcare that cause most concern. A sample of 789 respondents in Saudi Arabia were approached. Their study concluded that waiting area, confidentiality measures and environmental structure were the areas that cause the greatest concern among the health services users.

Boon-itt and Rompho (2012)³ had used the SERVQUAL model to assess the service quality in Hotel Industry in Thailand. A sample of 108 respondents were selected among customers of Boutique hotels and business hotels and the data was analyzed. The study concluded that there was very little differentiation between perception and expectations between boutique hotels and business hotels.

Methodology

This paper is aimed at assessing the perception of service at a leading diagnostic service provider in Hyderabad. The diagnostic service provider has several branches across Hyderabad and sees a lot of rush especially on holidays for their diagnostic services.

The study was conducted with an intention to understand the gap between what the customers expect and their perception after availing the services. Towards this end, the following objectives were framed to carry out the study:

- To find the gap between customer expectations and customer perception of the diagnostic services.

- To analyze and identify the parameters for which high levels deviations between expectations and perception had been observed.

The expectation of the customers is based on what they had experienced in the past or had been told by acquaintances and was measured through a structured questionnaire. The perception to the services availed is based on the personal experiences and were measured through a similar questionnaire.

Sample

A sample of conveniently approached 50 customers was used for the analysis. The sample was drawn from those customers who were willing to answer the questions from three centers of the diagnostics center.

Analytical Tools

SERVQUAL is a popular tool used in the services sector to measure the gap between expected and perceived. This study also uses the SERVQUAL model though with truncated parameters and suitable modifications to suit the objectives of the study.

The questionnaire contained 10 questions with Reliability, Responsiveness, Tangibles and Communication as parameters. The respondents were asked to rate the questions on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being fully agree, 2 being partly agree, 3 no opinion, 4 partly disagree and 5 fully disagree.

The questionnaire was structured on the following lines

Perception

Reliability	Do you feel that the results of the tests are accurate
	Do you feel that the methods adopted for the tests are correct
Responsiveness	Do you feel that the staff are friendly
	Do the staff show concern like arranging for quick test if required
	Do you feel that the staff are acting with the required speed
Tangibles	Are the waiting hall, lab rooms and wash rooms clean
	Are the waiting hall, lab rooms and wash rooms clearly marked
	Do you feel that there are adequate furniture in the lab
	Is the lighting bright
Communication	Is the lab communicating the results at the time given

Expectations

Reliability	You expect that the results of the tests to be accurate
	You expect that the methods adopted for the tests are correct
Responsiveness	You expect the staff to be friendly
	You expect the staff to show concern like arranging for quick test if required
	You expect the staff to act with required speed
Tangibles	You expect the waiting hall, lab rooms and wash rooms to be clean
	You expect the waiting hall, lab rooms and wash rooms to be clearly marked
	You expect that there will be adequate furniture in the lab
	You expect the lighting in the lab to be bright
Communication	You expect the lab to communicate the results at the time given

The difference between experience and expectations was measured for each of the parameter to understand and analyze the gap.

Results and Conclusion

This study was conducted to understand the gap, if any, between expectations and experience of the users of diagnostic services in the healthcare industry. The tool used for the study was SERVQUAL model given by Parasuraman et al.

Based on analysis of the data obtained, major gaps that were identified in the study pertained to Responsiveness and Tangibility. Even within these parameters, specifically a gap that was identified

pertained to attitude of helping customers and concern for customers. Within Tangibles, the study identified that there was a gap in clearly demarcated functional areas.

References

1. Qatari Ghazi Al and Haran Dave, "Determinants of users' satisfaction with primary health care settings and services in Saudi Arabia", International Journal of Quality in Healthcare, Vol 11, No.6.
2. Brown, Stephen and Swartz, Teresa, "A Gap analysis of Professional Service Quality", Journal of Marketing, Vol 53 No.2.
3. Boon-itt, Sakun and RomphoNopadol, "Measuring Service Quality Dimensions: An empirical analysis of Thai Hotel Industry", International Journal of Business Administration, Vol 3, No.5