

CONCEPTULISATION

3.1 CONCEPT OF SERVICES

Gronroos (2000) described that “services is a chain of procedures that prompt to an result, which can resolve issues of the customer, throughout relatively instantaneous production and consumption procedures”. Furthermore, customer takes part enthusiastically in the process of production. Kotler (2000) states that “service as any performance or act that transfers from one can to another and mainly intangible and doesn’t lead to the ownership of anything. Its production might or might not be tied to a physical product”.

Kotler (2003) said that the development of the service sector is relied upon to be an efficient means that of advancing economic restructuring and raising the competitiveness of new private undertakings. In many transition countries, developing export of services have been empowered by profitable institutional transformations and technological advances. Moreover revenues and growth animated by these exports have, thusly, impacted positively the potential for internal change, facilitating structural alteration and modernization.

Parker and Mathews (2001) defined service is any act or performance that one party transfer to another that is basically intangibles and does not end in the ownership of something.

A service is a combination of singular and perishable advantages

- Delivered from the responsible supplier of service, usually in close collaboration with his service suppliers.
- Generated by functions of technical systems and by different activities of peoples, respectively.
- Rendered separately to an authorized service consumer at his/her determined trigger, and, at long last, consumed and used by the activating service consumer for executing his/ her future business or private activity.

3.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICES

1. Intangibility

Services are intangible which is usually cannot be seen, touched, felt or smelt. On the other hand products are tangible. (Lovelock & wright, 2002) said that “Customer can get perceptual possession of physical and tangible objects”. A service is prepared and supplied on the spot and therefore it cannot be measured as simply as a tangible product.

2. Inseparability

According to Perez et al (2007), the service is created and devoured at identical time in maximum service organizations. Such type of personal contact is described to as “interactive process” and “interactive consumption” in service description. It comprises physical environs such as behavior of employees, and the customer’s attitude and requirements.

3. Perishability

Perishability feature of services means that the services can’t be stored for future sale. (Bruhn & George, 2006) defined that “Different from manufactured goods, services cannot be stored, saved, returned and resold. The level of Perishability within the quality of service is influenced by the level of intangibility”. There are two tools of marketing such as pricing and promotion which is usually suitable to handle this characteristic.

4. Heterogeneity

Every service is diverse in nature. This is the simple meaning of service heterogeneity. Each service varies according to the customers demand and choices as well as their perception and expectation. Services may be different as per the culture and regional bases. In addition services can also differ on the basis of nature of the service providers. If the passengers travelling by train on the first time the service quality are differ to the second time.

3.3 DEFINITION OF SERVICE QUALITY

Although abundantly examined, Service Quality is a challenging concept to describe. A few definitions have been proposed by leading theorists and various studies are done to explore the dimensions of the construct and to differentiate it from alternative closely associated constructs such as customer satisfaction. Some important definitions of service quality as defined by the researchers until now are:

Iacobucci, Ostrom and Grayson (1995), “Perhaps [Service] quality factors are those primarily under the control of management ... in contrast, perhaps the [customer] satisfaction factors are those that impact the experiential aspects of the service purchase from the customer’s point of view”

Hosseini (2008) defined “Service quality is determined by the differences between customer’s expectations of services provider’s performance and their evaluation of the services they received”.

Gefen (2002) “Service quality can be well-defined as “the difference between customers’ expectations for service performance prior to the service encounter and their perceptions of the service received”

Gronroos (1984) “The Service quality is the subjective comparison that customers make between the quality of the service that they want to receive and what they actually get”.

Service quality forms an important part of service marketing. Service quality is concern about carrying out the service reliably and perfectly. At a time when an organization performs a service not carefully, when it makes preventable mistakes, when it neglect to convey on appealing promises prepared to attract customers, it disturbs customers’ assurance and debilitates its chance of gaining a reputation for service quality. From the customer’s point of view, the evidence of a service is its immaculate performance (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991).

3.4 DIMENSION OF SERVICE QUALITY

1. Reliability

Bebko (2000) describes reliability as “the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately”. Reliability is the spinal cord of the service quality offered at Platforms. The Reliability in service quality at platforms can be stated as the ability to perform the service perfectly and dependably. In this research the reliability is measured by the variables clarity of announcement, accuracy of announcement, frequency of announcement, display of reservation chart, clarity of given in the time table, clarity of information display at stations, digital display.

2. Responsiveness

Responsiveness as dimension of service quality has been highlighted as willingness of the staff to help travellers and offer prompt services. (Zeithaml et al., 2006) recommend that “service providers ought to be dynamic and willful to assist their customers and to deliver rapid service. This dimension demands that the service provider ought to be more versatile in resolving their customers’ issues and requests. Firms even ought to have an ability to modify services for managing with their customers’ special needs”.

In this research study responsiveness is measured (including TTE, booking clerk, police and RPF) to respond, behavior of porter and sanitary workers, promptness of railway staff in satisfying the request, medical facilities provided on time etc.

3. Assurance

Empathy in the service quality dimension is the provision of caring, sense of security and efforts to know the travellers needs. (Robledo, 2001) recognizes assurance as “staff knowledge and politeness and the capability of the firm and its employees to rouse trust and confidence. This dimension comprises of four unique elements: competence, credibility, courtesy and security”. In this research study empathy is measured by various variables such as tourist information counter, facility of touch screen terminal counter, affordability of refreshments, management of parking and public address system computerization at the station provide better customer services.

4. Empathy

Assurance dimension of service quality offered at platforms relates to the knowledge and politeness of the staff and their aptitude to convey confidence and trust to the travellers. (Curry & Sinclair, 2002) define empathy as “the caring, personal attention that the firm offers to its customers”. In this study assurance is measured by various variables such as complaint handling system, security baggage counters, safety of passengers at transit area, security of luggage, providing help in theft and accidental situation

5. Tangibility

Tangibility is one of the important aspects of service quality offered at platforms of Indian Railway. (Robledo, 2001) describes “Tangibles are associated with the presence of physical facilities, personnel, equipment and communication materials”. In the research study the tangibility was measured by the variables such as sufficient surface of platforms, sufficient and comfortable seating arrangement, availability of power, hygiene and sanitation, availability of lighting, availability of fans, Facilities of drinking water, facility of waiting hall, toilet facility, ATM, postal and Telegraph services at platforms.

3.5 CONCEPT ABOUT CUSTOMER AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Teikake (2012) viewed that the word customer is used to describe the end users of a service or a product. Customer is a basic term preferring to an individual or business that purchases a product or service from one company or other person. It is additionally clarified as the end user of a product or organization. Usually, there are primary customers where an organization’s work is principally concentrated.

Kossmann (2006) there are two forms of customer, first is internal and second one is external customer. Internal customers viewed as the employers or staff within the company and external customers viewed as the stakeholders of the public road transport.

According to Crocker and West (2003), customer is 'anyone to whom is supplied a good or a service'.

Gronroos (1988) defined "satisfaction as a post selection appraising judgment regarding a particular purchase decisions. The most broadly acknowledged model, in which satisfaction is a component of disconfirmation, which in turn is a function of both expectations and performance".

Sigala (2004) defined Satisfaction as an experience of achievement of an expected outcome. Prior expectations about the level of service quality of a customer play a vital role in creating satisfaction or dissatisfaction with product and services.

Zheng and Jiaqing (2007) justifies that satisfaction depends on various factors, and there is no deficiency of literatures on this point. Studies propagated that customers wants the utmost effective service quality and reactions also to what they want.

Teikake (2012) underlined that Satisfaction can be describe on various levels as per customer judgments. For example, several customers can express a positive feeling about a product or a service whereas others customers can express a negative feeling related to a product or a service. Different customers judge service or a product differently creating them either highly satisfied whereas others may feel extremely dissatisfied.

Bruhn and George (2006) viewed "satisfaction as the customer's assessment of a product or service as far as whether that product or service has fulfilled the customer's needs and expectations".

Howard and Sheth (1969) define satisfaction as, "the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone".

Furse et al (1994) refers, "satisfaction as the measurement of one or more variety of customer opinions including rating of service quality, "future behavior intentions, customer self-assessment of outcome and satisfaction".

Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1995) defined satisfaction as 'a post consumption evaluation that a chosen alternative at least meets or exceeds expectations".

Oliver (1977) defines, “satisfaction is the consumer fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product of service itself, provided a pleasurable level of consumption- related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over fulfillment”.

Crompton and Mackay (1989) define, “satisfaction is a psychological outcome emerging from an experience”.

Vavra (1997) defines satisfaction as, “a satisfactory post- purchase experience with a product or services given an existing purchase expectation”.

Oliver (1981) define as, “the summary psychological state that resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’ prior feelings about the consumption experience”.

Woodruff and Gardial (1996) define, “Satisfaction, then, is the evaluation or feeling that results from the disconfirmation process. It is not the comparison itself (i.e., the disconfirmation process), but it is the customer response to the comparison. Satisfaction has an emotional component”.

Oliver (1999) defined, “Satisfaction as pleasurable fulfillment. Satisfaction is the customer sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure”.

According to Kotler et al (1996) customer satisfaction is determined by ‘how well the product meets the customer expectations for that product’.

Bitner and Hubbert (1994) customer satisfaction could be defined as “the customer overall dis/satisfaction with the organization based on all encounters and experiences with that particular organizations”.

Engel and Blackwell (1982) define, “Customer satisfaction is an evaluation that the chosen alternative is consistent with prior beliefs with respect to that alternative”.

Fornell and Westbrook (1983) define, “Customer satisfaction is an emotional response to the experiences provided by, associated with particular products or services

purchased, retail outlets, or even molar patterns of behavior such as shopping and buyer behavior, as well as the overall market place”.

Tse and Wilton (1988) defines as, “the consumer response to the evaluation of the perceived discrepancy between prior expectations (or some other norms of performance) and the actual performance of the product/services as perceived after its consumption”.

Yi (1990) “Customer satisfaction is a collective outcome of perception, evaluation and psychological reactions to the consumption experience with a product/service”.

Jamal and Naser (2002) define, “Customer satisfaction is the feeling or attitude of a customer towards a product or service after it has been used”.

Schiffman and Kaunk (2004) define customer satisfaction as “The individual perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations”.

3.6 SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

Nowadays the concept of quality has been changed because of the voice of the customer and customer awareness therefore services providers are required to assess the quality level from customer requirement and satisfaction benchmark perspective.

Service quality models are acquainted to reduce the gap between customer and service providers. With the assistance of these quality models, the service provider can comprehend customer necessities from quality perception in an exceedingly higher means.

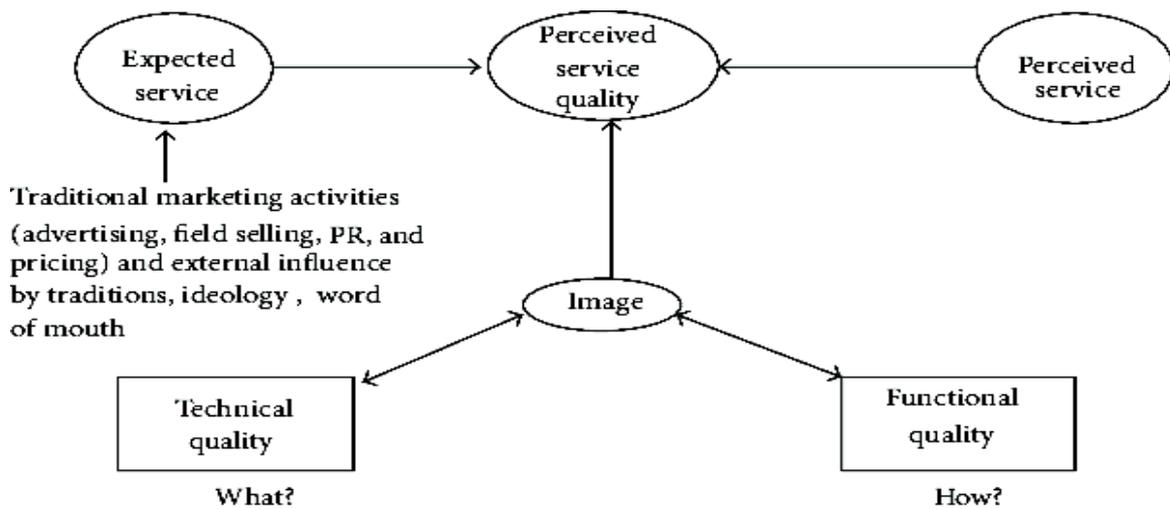
1. Technical and Functional Quality Model (Grönroos, 1984)

This model is generated with a specific goal of attaining customer satisfaction, the quality anticipated and really observed by the customers ought to be indistinguishable. The provider can only attain good outcomes on the market if they aware of however quality is apparent by the customers and also characteristics that effect on the service quality.

Grönroos describes “service quality as the outcome of an evaluation process, where the customers compare their expectations with the service they have received”. This model based on three components of service quality. First is technical quality which defines what the buyer receives as the outcome of purchasing the actual service. The second is functional quality which defines the process of service delivery and the third component is image that indicates how the features, initiated by and related to the technical and functional service quality, for example policies, traditions, social standard, service connection and goodwill are blended.

Figure 3.1

Technical and Functional Quality Model



Source: Grönroos (1984)

2. SERVQUAL

Yoo and Park (2007) “The SERVQUAL instrument has been broadly applied in a variation of service industries, comprising tourism and hospitality”.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) constructed a twenty two item instrument referred to as SERVQUAL for determining service quality perception of consumers.

SERVQUAL addresses various components of service quality separated into the dimensions of tangibles, assurance reliability, empathy and responsiveness.

SERVQUAL considers the perception of customers of the related significance of service attributes. That enables an organization to plan out and to utilize its resources to enhance the one of the most critical service attributes. In order to access the customer satisfaction numerous quality measurement are necessary to be considered.

“According to the SERVQUAL model, service quality can be measured by identifying the gaps between customers’ expectations of the service to be concentrated and their perceptions of the actual performance of service. SERVQUAL is established on five dimensions of service:

1. Tangibility: Tangibility states to the physical features related with the service encounter. (Mohsin & Ryan, 2005). The physical environments signified by objects (such as, interior design) and subjects (such as, employee’s appearance).
2. Reliability: The service provider’s ability to offer precise and reliable services; constantly execution the service right.
3. Responsiveness: An organization’s ability to help its customers by giving quick and productive service performances; the enthusiasm that employees show too quickly and efficiently to resolve customer requests and complaints.
4. Assurance: Varied features that offer confidence to customers (such as the organization’s specific service knowledge, courteous and honest behavior from employees).
5. Empathy: The service organization’s eagerness to offer every customer with individual service” (Nadiri & Hussain, 2005).

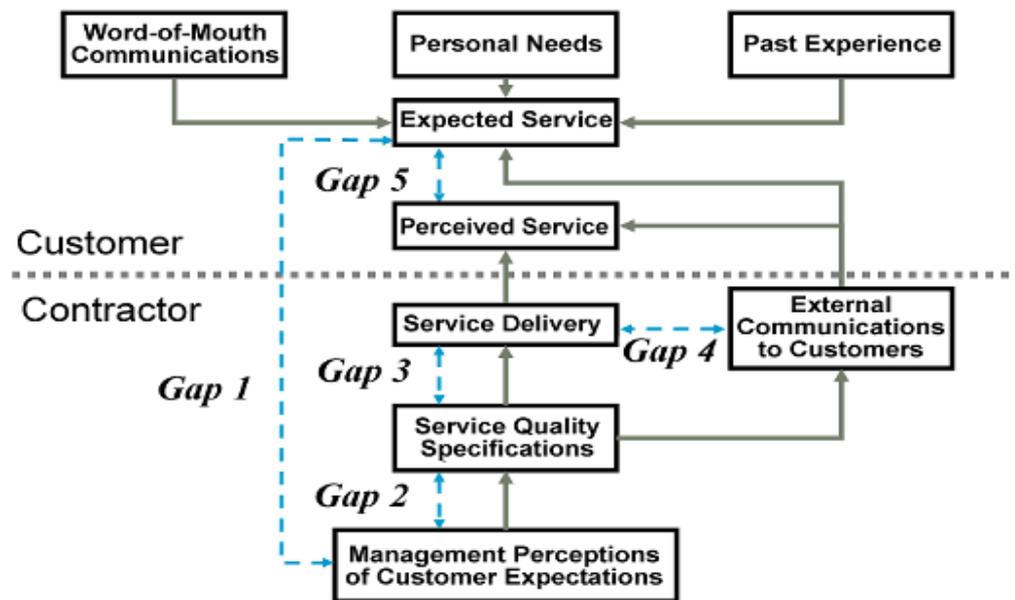
With reference to these constraints the Parasuraman, Zeithaml describe the Servqual model in terms of Gap model. The gap model of service quality focuses on customer. With the immersion of customer expectation and customer perception the service quality bests in an organized and applied way.

Figure 3.2

SERVQUAL Model

ServQual

Source: Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, Delivering Quality Service



Source: SERVQUAL (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1985)

In Servqual model given by Parasuraman, Valeria Zeithaml and Leonard Berry, there exists a gap amongst the services delivered and services received by the customer. There is a gap in understanding the customer necessities from the service providers and customer's perception. Parasuraman and Zeithaml originate that service quality is measured between service perception and expectations.

Gap 1: Customer Expectations and Management Perception

Gap 2: Management perception and Service Specification

Gap 3: Service Deliveries and External Communication

Gap 4: Customer Expectation and Management Perception

Gap 5: Customer Expectation and Experience

Service quality can be measured by measuring the gap amongst two diverse areas. Broader is the gap will specify the inferior service quality and the minor value of gap will show the improved service quality.

There is exists a huge gap (Gap 5 in diagram) amongst what customer expects from service provider and what they really receive regarding the services. SERVQUAL model states that to enhance the services quality, there is a requirement that every service provider would near this gap and so can enhance the level customer satisfaction. As pointed out in this model the customer gap (gap 5) is affected by the entirety of all provider Gaps:

$$\text{Gap 5} = \text{Gap 1} + \text{Gap 2} + \text{Gap 3} + \text{Gap 4}$$

If the service provider could control and diminish its four Gaps the Customer Gap can be decreased.

The higher quality service needs that service provider ought to recognize the customer need and their expectation carefully. In any case, if the service provider knows the customer expectation from service provider perception at that point there exists a gap (Gap 1). Once the service provider recognizes the customer expectation appropriately (from customer perception also) at that point expectations are formed into customer oriented service designs and standards. If service provider does not comprehend the customer perception noticeably then it will prompt to another Gap which is Gap 2 in Gap model display diagram. This inappropriate design and standard may additionally lead to inadequate service delivery, which developed Gap 3 in diagram. Generally when service provider assurances some of the services to customer concerning the delivered and if the service provider fails in satisfying those promises then this may additionally prompt to customer dissatisfaction. This absence of fulfillment leads to Gap 4 in diagram.

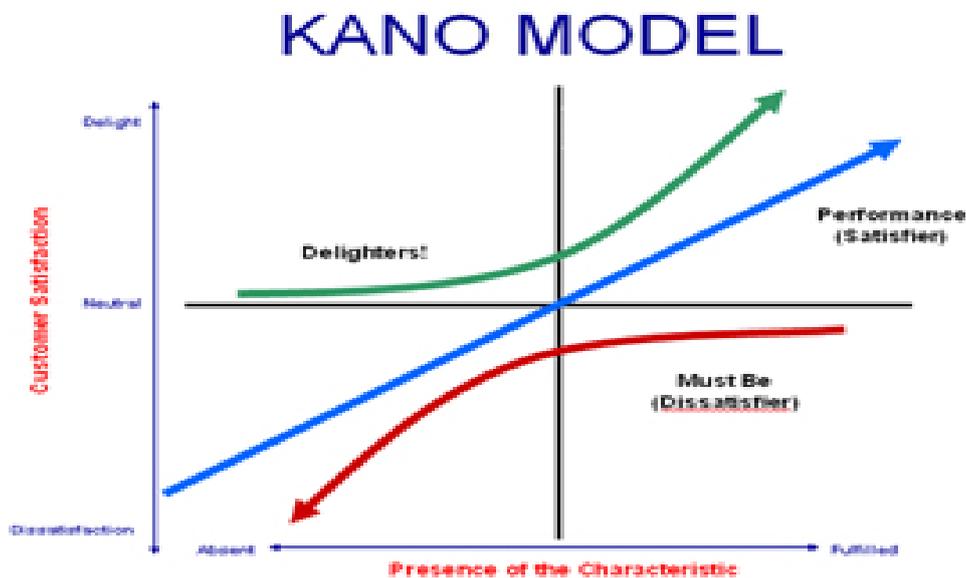
To enhance the overall satisfaction among service customer there is a requirement of improving the overall service quality from customer perception. That implies service provider must attempt to decrease the Gap 5 which can be less if Gap 1, Gap 2, Gap 3

and Gap 4 are least. This indicates that service provider ought to know the expectations of the customers in order to minimize the Gap 5.

3. The KANO Model

Professor Noriaki Kano created this model in the 80's. The (Kano et al., 1984) model of customer satisfaction categorizes traits in view of how they are viewed by customers and their impact on satisfaction of customer (Kano at al., 1984). Kano offered the satisfaction model after considering three fundamental components, which effect on customer satisfaction. Kano model separate the requirements of customers into three broader classifications; the ordinary requirements which must be satisfied by the service providers, the exciting requirements which help in enhancing the service value and the expected requirements which will create customer as happy if delivered by the service provider.

Figure 3.3
Kano Model



(Source: Kano, Seraku, Takahashi & Tsuji, 1984)

1. Basic components: (normal requirements)-these are the basic requirement, which will result dissatisfaction if they are not fulfilled.

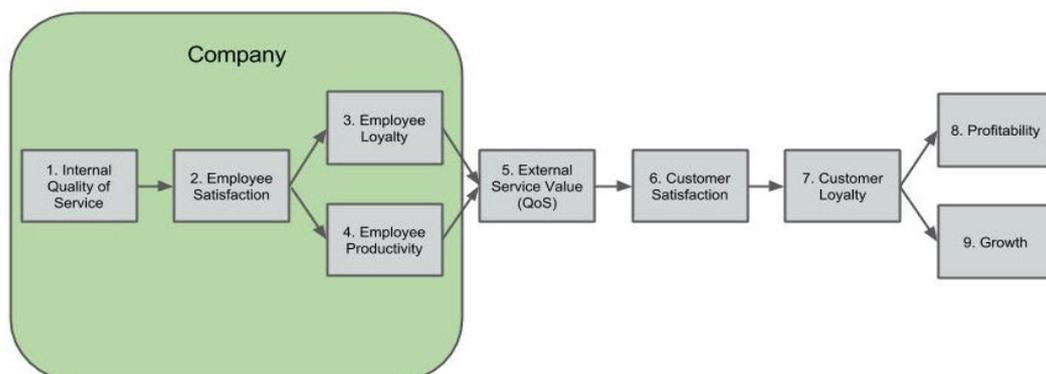
2. Excitement components (Exciting requirements)-such components enhance customer satisfaction if provided however do not result dissatisfaction if they are not provided. Such factors wonder the customers and create happiness.

3. Performance components (Expected Requirement) - these are the expected components which result satisfaction if the performance of such components is high, they result dissatisfaction if the performance is low. Such attributes are like information and customer care services provided by the service providers. If the customers acquire the efficient information then it enhances the performance and level of satisfaction among customers.

4. Service Profit Chain Model

If we look towards the service profit chain as given by Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger in 1997, it displays that the profit and development of service organization relies on the customer loyalty which is related with customer satisfaction. If the customer is reliant on some specific services and if they get that service then customer might be satisfied however customer satisfaction is related with service quality. Whatever customer wants if they get but no usage then it will lead to the low quality thus unquestionably with such service customer will not be satisfied. However if the delivered service quality is good then it will enhance the customer satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction enhances the customer loyalty and this will help service providers in holding the old endorsers and additionally adding the new customers.

Figure 3.4
Service Profit Chain Model



Source: Heskett, Sasser & Schlesinger (1997)

5. Cause Effect Model

The cause effect model mainly helps to understand the casual relationship and association among various sets of variable considered under study. It indicates the relationship between intervening, extraneous, dependent and independent variables. Casual analysis essentially indicates the major effect of several service factors on the service quality. This model presents that various attributes and their corresponding impact on the service characteristics. The impact shows that there are various other factors exist, which may play significant role in bringing change in quality factors and so may influence the customer satisfaction. Here the service quality has turned into the reason for which the expected impact is the fulfillment of customer needs that means the customer satisfaction. Through this model researcher is attempting to present the important factors from customer perception perspective, which may influence the customer satisfaction and so could hamper the service quality. The service quality is a reason, which is great if the customer satisfaction level is high. That's why the assumed effect of service quality is the customer satisfaction.