**Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz’s (1996)** explained about retail service quality scale in measuring the gap between the customers’ expectations and their perceptions about the service quality of retail stores in India. The validity of the scale was assessed using data collected from these stores and statistical analysis was performed to test the dimensionality of service quality and to examine the reliability of the scale in India.

**Dabholkar, (1996)** identified that the retail environment today is changing more rapidly than ever before. It is characterized by intensifying competition from both domestic and foreign companies, and a spate of mergers and acquisitions. There are more sophisticated and demanding customers who have great expectations related to their consumption experiences.

**Donthu and Yoo (1998)** studied the effect of the cultural orientation of consumers on their service quality expectations. Based on Hofstede’s dimensions of culture, they hypothesized and tested the influence of culture on consumer service quality expectations and found that consumers varied in both their overall expectations with regard to service quality and their expectations of each of the service quality dimensions as a result of cultural orientation.

**Mehta, Lalwani and Han (2000)** studied the usefulness of RSQS as a tool for measuring the service quality of retail outlets of different categories in Singapore. A strong inter-correlation is found between the
various dimensions of the RSQS in case of supermarket and electronic goods.

**Fadzly and Ahmad (2004)** conducted a survey on audit expectation gap in Malaysia to examine whether an expectation gap existed in Malaysia among the auditors, auditees and audit beneficiaries in relation to auditors’ duties. In addition, the study analyzed the nature of the gap using Porter’s framework. The results proved the existence of an audit expectation gap in Malaysia.

**Lee and Palaniappan (2006)** studied that the Auditors and audit beneficiaries placed much higher expectations on auditors’ duties when compared to what auditors perceived their duties to be. The analysis of the expectation gap indicated the existence of unreasonable expectation of the part of users; deficient standards of auditing in Malaysia; and deficient performance of auditors.

**Kurtz and Clow (1998)** defined the corporate image or firm image as “the overall or global opinion customers have of a firm or organization”. If customers perceive the company as high image, they tend to patronize it. On the other hand, if company’s good image is damaged, customer will be dissatisfied and are not likely to return to the company. Moreover, they will tell their negative experiences to others.

**Boshoff (1997)** evaluated the reliability and validity of the instrument in South African retail environment. Although the study found the instrument to be valid and reliable for measuring retail service
quality in South Africa, its applicability in India must be investigated through a formal research.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) observed that SERVQUAL is the most prominent and the most widely used. The authors of this model proposed that the consumer’s opinion of quality is formed by an internal comparison of performance with expectations. Good service quality means that the customers’ perceptions of service performance meet or exceed their expectations of what the service firm should provide. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with firms in four different service industries, identified five determinants of service quality which include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

Babakus and Boller (1992) used the SERVQUAL scale to measure service quality in an electric and gas utility company. They found that the proposed five-factor structure of SERVQUAL is problematic and doubted the suitability of the SERVQUAL scale for measuring quality across a wide range of services. The applicability of SERVQUAL across different cultures is also an issue as SERVQUAL was developed in a Western environment and, due to cultural differences; it is likely that cultural factors will influence its applicability.

Cronin and Taylor (1992) observed that an interesting feature of the empirical studies which have analyzed SERVQUAL is the wide variety of empirical factor structures obtained. These factor structures vary
primarily in the number of interpretable factors which consistently differed from the five-factor structure.

**Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1993)** found that some of the studies failed to support the five-dimensional factor structures. The considerable variation in empirical factor structures reported in the literature hampers our understanding of service quality and casts doubts over the use of the SERVQUAL instrument in future research. It also shows that a considerable amount of research still needs to be done concerning the dimensionality of service quality in general and SERVQUAL in particular, as called for by its developers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1994).

**Dabholkar, Thorpe and Rentz (1996)** proposed an instrument based on SERVQUAL which measures service quality in a retailing environment. This instrument also captures, apart from the common dimensions that are likely to be shared by pure service environments and retail environments, additional dimensions of retail service quality relevant to the retail environment. However, very few studies have utilized the instrument for evaluating service quality of retail stores. Like SERVQUAL, the reliability and validity of this instrument could also be questioned.

**Siu and Cheung (2001)** applied Retail Service Quality Standards (RSQS) to explore its usefulness in a departmental store chain in Hong Kong and concluded that six service quality dimensions were identified
viz., personal interaction, physical appearance, promises, policy, convenience and problem solving.

**Joshua A J and Moli. P. Koshi (2005)** Their study on ‘Expectation and perception of service quality in old and new generation banks’, observed that the performance of the new generation banks across all the service quality dimensions are better than those of old generation banks.

**Al-Fazwan (2005)** found that the bank should concentrate on accessibility dimension. He stated that the particular bank should take maximum efforts to raise the level of services to meet out the customer expectations.

**Koushiki Choudhury (2007)** suggested that customers distinguish four dimensions of service quality in the case of the retail banking industry in India, namely, attitude, competence, tangibles and convenience. Identifying the underlying dimensions of the service quality construct in the Indian retail banking industry is the first step in the definition and hence provision of quality service. The paper has drawn upon the findings of the service quality dimensions to contend the initiatives that bank managers can take to enhance their employees' skills and attitudes and instill a customer-service culture.

**Sudesh (2007)** revealed that poor service quality in public sector banks is mainly because of deficiency in tangibility, lack of responsiveness and empathy. Private sector banks, on the other hand, were found to be more reformed in this regards. Above all, the foreign
banks were relatively close to the expectations of their customers with regard to various dimensions of service quality. Further, the study revealed that there existed service quality variation across demographic variables and suggested that management of banks should pay attention to potential failure points and should be responsive to customer problems.

Sandip Gosh Hasra and BL Srivastava (2009) indicated that the bank should pay attention to the various dimensions of service quality and pay more attention to dimension of assurance-empathy to increase loyalty to a company, willingness to pay, customer commitment and customer trust.

3.2 RESEARCH GAP

All the previous research concentrated on the service quality gaps that exist in various other service sectors. But the research for service gap in retail petroleum distribution outlets is very rare and also the customers’ expectations of retail services, their level of satisfaction, customers’ perception on retail service competencies, relationship among the factors and the relationship between the expected and actual service quality dimensions, etc have not been discussed in the previous researches. Hence, the researcher selected the topic “Service Gap Analysis in Retail Petroleum Industry” and analyzed all identified gap areas in the present study and finally offered appropriate suggestions to bridge/close the service gap in the study units.
3.3 CONCLUSION

Research information and findings advocated by various experts on the current title during various periods have been collected from various sources. All those information provided in this chapter are as a review to gain some experiences and knowledge about the application of service gap analysis in the retail distribution of petroleum products for the growth and development of petroleum industries. The next chapter presents the methodology adopted for carrying out this research work.