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BLENDING WITH THE BEST: EVALUATION OF SERVICE QUALITY OF HOTEL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Assessing and improving service quality has become an important task for many organizations. While the services sector has grown, service providers have become aggressive and service quality has become an emphasis of their attention. The concept and the conceptual model of service quality is indispensable if we wish to understand the origin of service quality and probable gaps in quality. This paper aims to review existing literature on service quality management in the hotels, its process, concepts, dimensions, and the effective service quality management framework. The purpose of this paper is to show the importance of service quality in hotel industry from both the conceptual standpoint and that of service quality measurement models and encourages hotels to improve its management to better satisfy their guests. The research aim is to gain and understanding of the service quality models in hotel industry and provides industry with sound research from which to develop effective model to facilitate best practices in improving overall service quality Purpose of this study is to examine whether hotel industries service quality efforts are a reason why guest choose a hotel. Do business travellers and meeting planners expect certain quality standards and engagement while staying at the hotel? Do the overall service quality affect their hotel stay? These are the emerging questions the hotel industry faces to better service and satisfy guests. This study also includes understanding the technological changes and needs of the guest and why they choose the hotel. The objective of the research is to discover whether there is need for hotels to seriously look into the practices in operations and management and improve overall service delivery.

KEYWORDS

Service Quality, Hotel Industry, Technology, Guest Satisfaction and Total Quality Management.

INTRODUCTION

The Concept of service quality originates from consumer behaviour and confirmation and/or disconfirmation paradigm (Gronroos, 1992). Consumers all over the world have become more quality conscious; hence there has been an increased customer demand for higher quality service. Service operations worldwide are affected by this new wave of quality awareness and emphasis (Lee, 2004). So service-based companies like the Hotels, Travel business etc. are bound to provide exceptional services to their customers in order to have sustainable competitive advantage, especially in the current trend of trade liberalization and globalization.

Service quality is one of the heavily researched topics in management research with various studies having been conducted to study different factors that constitute service quality and its effect on customer perceptions (Parasuraman, *et al.*, Zeithaml, 1988; 1988; Sureshchandar *et al.*, 2003; O'Neill, *et al.*, 2004).

Researchers have defined service quality in relation to the concept of customer perceived quality, which is based exclusively on the perspective of customers. Such a awareness is built in a place where an organization supplies goods and services to customers in a manner that satisfies them and where they examine service quality (Babajide, 2011; Zeithaml, *et al.*, 1996; Choi, *et al.*, 1998; Mei, *et al.*, 1999; Cronin, *et al.*, 2000; Gounaris, *et al.*, 2003; O'Neill, 2001; Mill, 2002; Saleh, *et al.*, 1991; Oberoi, *et al.*, 1990; Presbury, *et al.*, 2005; Qu, *et al.*, 1998; Rust, *et al.*, 1993; Carman, 1990; Christie, *et al.*, 2002).

Quality has been defined differently by different authors. According to the researchers some prominent definitions include conformance to requirements (Crosby, 1984), fitness for use (Juran, 1988) or one that satisfies the customer (Eiglier, *et al.*, 1987). As per the Japanese production beliefs quality implies zero defects in the firm's contributions.

Service quality has been continually recognized as a significant research focus for the hospitality industry (Bojanic, *et al.*, 1994; Saleh, *et al.*, 1991; Min, *et al.*, 2002; Kincaid, *et al.*, 2010; Fink, *et al.*, 1991). It has been correlated to attract new customers that are employee satisfaction and commitment, customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, reduced costs, enhanced corporate image, and increased business performance (Sureshchander, *et al.*, 2002; Berry, *et al.*, 1989). In spite of the increasing importance of the service sector and of the consequence of quality as a spirited factor, service quality concepts are not well developed (Ghobadian, *et al.*, 1994). As such, there is substantial debate in the relevant fiction as to how best to conceptualize this occurrence (Akbaba, 2006).

Service quality is a key element in service industry. Good quality service can increase attract customers to repeatedly consume, customer satisfaction, prompt profit and market share, and establish customer loyalty (Hackl, *et al.*, 2000). In the highly competitive hospitality industry, service quality will not only give confidence to customer satisfaction, but also increase sales and profit (Nadiri, *et al.*, 2005). Thus, hotel managers need to understand and meet consumer needs. (Saravan, *et al.*, 2007), service quality remains significant in the service industries, as businesses struggle to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace and achieving customer satisfaction. Service industries compete in the marketplace with generally undifferentiated products; therefore service quality becomes a primary competitive weapon (Stafford, 1996). Literature has proven that providing quality service delivery to attracts new ones, customers retains them, lead to positive referral by word of mouth, enhances corporate image, and above all guarantees survival and profitability (Ladhari, 2009; Negi, 2009).

HOTEL INDUSTRY, TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE QUALITY

Hotels play the major role of providing guests a dwelling away from home. This facility facilitates the further attraction of guests towards a place because it makes their visit more expedient. A hotel refers to a commercial company providing lodging and meals on momentary basis to its customers. In 1902 the "Indian hotels company" was incorporated by the founder of the Tata group Mr. Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata and the company opened up its first property The Taj Mahal Palace and Tower in Mumbai. After this there was an increase in the Indian hotel industry as many other Indians followed the footprints of Mr. Tata, Mr. Mohan Singh Oberoi who started by taking over the grand hotel Calcutta and expanded his business. Afterwards companies like ITC and Air India also ventured into this field. In the last few years the hotel industry has transformed and urbanized significantly in terms of the services it provides. India is an eye-catching destination for tourists because of its rich heritage, which includes the famous Taj Mahal, various temples and caves and many other famous monuments. Also there are a lot of businessmen and officials who visit India for business purposes because of the buy and sell dealings that our country has with the world. Likewise within our country also there are people who travel from one state to another or from one city to another for business or vacation. Ludhiana is known as the Manchester of India which is a major business city with industries like hosiery, textiles, bicycle and bicycle parts, hand tools etc. It is like a home to some big companies like Hero Cycles, Oswal, Trident, Vardhaman etc. Because of it being a business city it has a lot of business travellers from all over the world. Hence it requires not only a good number of hotels but also good quality hotels to accommodate these travellers (Thapar, 2007). All these hotels differ in the type and amount of services they provide like lodgings, food and beverage services, amusement, leisure, communication, transportation, room service, laundry service, conference and meeting schedule, first aid, etc. Quality is measured to be of very great importance in the hotel industry. (Mill, 1986) the researcher identifies the aim of service quality as being able to ensure a satisfied customer. Still, the focus of quality initiatives has been primarily on selection and training of front line staff. (Kerr, *et al.*, 1988) *The Mayfair Crest Hotel in Brisbane, Queensland*, has developed an approach to service quality which resembles TQM. The researcher describes this approach on the basis of an overall mission of the hotel. The particular mission was flowing all the way through the hotel by each department and subsequently each worker being asked to describe the meaning of this mission in their own framework. Thus in general direction of the staff of the hotel was brought together to develop the teamwork that is vital to TQM. Growth of quality management in the hospitality industry has mainly followed the

pattern set by the mechanized sector. In the early hours approaches were meant at specifying and forbidden the quality of tangible aspects such as food and stay. The hospitality industry has therefore twisted consecutively to quality assurance models and to total quality management. Both concepts are presently evolving to fit industry's requirements. Product-oriented concerns of mechanized industry such as numerical process control and 'zero defects', are of small interest to the hospitality industry, which stresses first appearances and unusual object encounters between guests and workers. Service quality management therefore emphasizes compassion to guest requirements, training and customer care. Various proven techniques from mechanized industry, for example, team building and communication systems are nevertheless equally applicable to hospitality organizations and are inch by inch being adopted.

TQM was developed for the manufacturing industry and has only been used in a small number of service organizations, even though TQM incorporates precious elements for the improvements of business processes for example, as a philosophy for constant leadership, improvement, human resource management and planning training (Powell, 1995). The goal of total quality management is to produce products and services again and again in high quality. Certainly, TQM was created to advance firm's competitive advantage in the long run. TQM includes programs such as employee empowerment, communication, management-employee relationship development, increased training and the creation of an open organization (O' Mahony, B., *et al.*, 2001). The cause is that it has not been widely practised in the service sector is because of differences between product and service characteristics. These are many and wide-ranging, however one important difference is that the quality of products can be controlled and defects rectified after the goods have been produced. In the service division products and services are produced and consumed at the same time and there is no opportunity to rectify a fault before the customers consumes it. A simple example would be an overdone steak (product) or providing an incorrect meal to a guest (service). In addition the implementation of TQM is costly and involves large scale resources and the development of extensive performance method (Naj, 1993; Fuhcsberg, 1992a; 1993b; Schaffer, *et al.*, 1992). The idea of perishability is another important issue that separates products and services. Services cannot be stored or placed in list, which means that if a hotel has 100 rooms and only manages to sell 40 rooms for that day, the remaining 60 rooms represent revenue forgone (Kotler, Bowen and Makens, 2010). Ritz Calton, UAE hotel industry, Australian hotel industry, china hotel industry etc., are few of the examples of hotels that use Total Quality Management. In summing-up, Total Quality Management is a philosophy that has been established to improve quality in the production process.

Hospitality services are a melodious mixture of three elements- material products, behaviour and attitude of workers and the surroundings (Reuland R, Coudrey J and Fagel A, 1985). Basically services fluctuate from products in terms of how they are produced evaluate and consumed. Some of the key importance to service quality are intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, differing standards and criteria of services, perishability, simultaneity etc., (Thawani, S., 2004). (E I Farra, 1996) the author finds that price was the most important factor which influences the benefaction of medium priced hotels by customers. Many studies have been conducted on the service quality issues of hotels across the world, but very few have been conducted in India. (Thomson and Thomson, 1995) the researchers conducted a study on quality issues of nine hotels in Wellington, New Zealand and Juwaheer in 2004 analysed the strategic importance of service quality in hotels of Mauritius. (Shergill, 2004) the author examined travellers' perceptions when evaluating the service quality of hotels in New Zealand and identified factors considered important to customers using factor analysis. (Davidson, 2003) the author argued that there was a fundamental link between good organizational climate and the level of service quality in a hotel. In another study the author examined the service quality in hotels and also built-in customer satisfaction in organizational culture and climate. SERVQUAL was considered to be the most suitable tool to measure service quality of hotels (Fernandez, 2005). (Knutson B, Stevens P, Wullaert C, Patton M and Yokoyama R, 1991) used SERVQUAL to create a lodging specific instrument called LODGSERV which is a 26 item index designed to measure consumer expectations for the service quality in the hotel experience.

(Mohsin and Locker, 2010) the author assessed the service quality perception of customers of luxury hotels in India. They provided an opportunity to be familiar with, in ranking order, the features that are considered important by the guests staying in luxury hotels. (Knutson B., Stevens, P., Patton, M., & Thomson, C, 1992) the researchers investigated the application of the SERVQUAL instrument and developed a new scale called LODGSERV. Based on their study the researchers identify five dimensions which include reliability, tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy was developed for LODGSERV. (Mei, A.W.O., Dean, A.M., & White, C.J, 1999) the authors examine the dimensions of service quality in the Australian hotel industry by using SERVQUAL as a base and resulted in developing a new scale called the HOLSERV. From the findings of the study, they concluded that service quality was represented by three dimensions and those were relating to tangibles, employees, and reliability. According to these three dimensions, the best forecaster of overall service quality was employees.

TABLE: 1.1

Source	Definition	Implications
The oxford dictionary (Ingram <i>et al.</i> , 1997)	The degree or level of excellence; characteristics; something that is special about in a person or thing	Quality has two parts: (1) its inherent characteristics (2) a standard of excellence
The British standards institute (1987) Juran (1980)	Quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs	The implication of this definition is that quality has to resolve the user's actual or perceived needs Quality is judge by its ability to meet needs
Ernst and young (Ingram <i>et al.</i> , 1997)	Quality is the conformance to specification and the relative absence of defects	Quality is judged positively and negatively compared to the expectation
Feigenbaum (1983)	Quality is the total composite product and service characteristics of marketing; engineering and manufacture; and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectation by customer	Quality is derived through a range of processes which transform the end product or service
Oakland (1989)	Quality is simply meeting the requirements	Quality has to be equal to the demands place upon it
Deming (1982)	Quality is the predictable degree of uniformity and dependability at low coat and suited to the market	Quality is also measured on a cost / benefit basis
Dodwell and Simmons (1994)	Quality is concerned with delighting the customer	The final test of quality is a subjective one
Day and Peters (1994)	Quality is rather like pornography in this respect. It may not be easy defined, but it is known when it is seen	
Eraqi (2002)	Quality as a concept is considered as a philosophy overwhelmed the organization management. It is a continuous improvement	Quality has three components: (1) internal customer satisfaction (2) external customer satisfaction (3) the efficiency of processes

Source: Adapted from Ingram, H., *et al.* (1997)

SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS AS MEASUREMENT TOOL

Conceptualizations of service quality are based on two separate schools led by (Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml, 1985, 1988) and (Gronroos, 1982, 1990), or on the other hand called the "North American School" and the "Nordic School" respectively (Brogowicz, Delene and Lyth, 1990). Researchers have generally adopted one of these two conceptualizations (Brady, *et al.*, 2001).

The Nordic School renowned that service quality, as perceived by customers, which consists of two dimensions namely functional quality and technical quality. The first and foremost dimension identified by Nordic School is Functional quality which refers to the service delivery process and technical quality refers to the service quality outcomes. SERVQUAL focuses on the functional quality feature, but neglects the technical quality feature (Kang, 2006).

The North American School identified five dimensions that customers use to evaluate service quality: empathy, reliability, responsiveness, tangibles, and assurance. The recognized dimensions gave birth to a service quality measurement tool called SERVQUAL.

The early SERVQUAL measurement tool (survey instrument) was developed basic information. Their responses fell into ten key dimensions which were later revised to five dimensions according to Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1988).

The definitions of the ten dimensions by Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985) are as follows

TABLE: 1.2

Dimensions	Definitions
Tangibles	Appearance of communication materials, equipment, personnel and physical facilities
Reliability	Capability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Responsiveness	Enthusiasm to help customers and provide punctual service
Competence	Ownership of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service
Courtesy	Friendliness, respect, Politeness and consideration of contact personnel
Credibility	Honesty, believability and Trustworthiness of the service provider
Security	Risk or doubt, Freedom from danger
Communication	Maintain customers well-versed in the language that they can understand and listening to them
Access	Accessibility and ease of contact
Understanding the customer	Creating the effort to know customers and their needs

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml (1985)

In later stages only the responsiveness, tangibles and reliability dimensions from the original SERVQUAL (1985) remained while the communication, courtesy, security, competence and credibility dimensions formed the *assurance* dimension which is defined as knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and assurance. The access and understanding the customer dimensions shaped the *empathy* dimension which is defined as kind, individualized notice the firm provides its customers (Parasuraman, *et al.*, 1988). SQ for each of the five dimensions is captured by a gap score which is the comparison of expectations and perceptions (Jiang, *et al.*, 2003). The purpose of the SERVQUAL tool is to provide a basic "skeleton" (group of core evaluation criteria) fundamental service quality, which would rise above multiple dimension contexts and provide managers with deeper insights concerning areas for development (Yap, D., *et al.*, 2007).

There are five dimensions of SQ namely,

- Tangibility (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2003; Kang & James, 2004; Cronin & Taylor, 1992b; Saleh & Ryan, 1991)
- Reliability (AlRousan, 2011; Parasuraman. *et al.*, 1988a; Kotler, *et al.*, 1984; Ladhari, 2009)
- Responsiveness (Cheung & Law, 1998; Knuston *et al.*, 1991; Antony & Ghosh, 2004; Upal, 2008)
- Assurance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992a; Al Khattab, 2011; Powapaka, 1996; Pitt, *et al.*, 1994)
- Empathy (Harvey, 1998; Parasuraman. *et al.*, 1988a; Mohsin, 2011; Qu & Nelson, 1998; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1993)

Numerous studies have recognized SERVQUAL, but Parasuraman were the initial to point out that the direction of marketing services is one of the considerations in guest management. Service quality in the hotel industry is very difficult to understand compared with product quality because the previous is insubstantial. Numerous studies reported that the SERVQUAL scale is not worldwide because the dimensionality of service quality seems that depends on the type of service examined (Ladhari, 2009). There has been changeable help for the soundness of the SERVQUAL model in the hotel service industry (Wilkins *et al.*, 2007). (Akan, 1995) the applicability of the SERVQUAL model in the Turkish hospitality industry and identifies seven dimensions in the model such as courtesy and competence of the person, communication and transactions, tangibles, knowledge and understanding of the customer, accuracy and speed of service, study of the hotel industry, solutions to problems and accuracy of hotel reservations. (Mei, *et al.*, 1999) studied the dimensions of service quality in the Australian hotel industry and develop a new scale of service quality in the hospitality industry, called "HOLSERV," which consist of three dimensions such as reliability, tangibles and employees. (Saleh, *et al.*, 1991) report five dimensions of service quality that vary from those in the SERVQUAL model such as conviviality, tangibles, reassurance, avoidance of sarcasm and empathy. (Oberoi, *et al.*, 1990) service quality plays a significant role in meeting hotels in the United Kingdom and reported that service quality perception has only two dimensions such as tangibles and intangibles. (Getty, *et al.*, 1994) explains the validity of the SERVQUAL dimensions in the hotel division and reported that only two of the dimensions that is tangibles and reliability are basic. The author tested the dimensions of service quality in the hotel industry in the United States and develop a new scale called "lodging quality index" (LQI) which consist of five service quality dimensions such as responsiveness, confidence, tangibility, communication and reliability. (Al Roussan, 2011) examines Parasuraman model for hotel service quality and customer loyalty in Jordanian hotels using the Marriott hotel chain as a case for study. The study discusses the five gaps in excellence of service in the background of Jordan and applies this model to the Marriott hotel chain to test its service quality. The advantage of this structure is applying the rudiments of various concepts into a clarified hotel and tourism industry management.

TABLE : 1.3

Concept No:	Dimension	Author	Application
1	Tangibility	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985; AlRousan, 2011	Tangibility is the service dimension that makes a product or service sensible and usable for customers
2	Reliability	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985; AlRousan, 2011; Tat, <i>et al.</i> , 1999	Reliability is defined as the aptitude of a service supplier to punctually deliver a good service quality. Observing service delivery complaints handling, pricing, and contracts are all important for a business.
3	Assurance	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985; AlRousan, 2011	Assurance is with deliberation to the service quality custody which understands on the ability to activate trust and confidence of the product or service provided
4	Responsiveness	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985; Knutson <i>et al.</i> , 1990; Al Rousan, 2011	Responsiveness is the thoughtfulness to help guest by providing instant service as soon as a request is arrived. The service guests will provide soon and punctual attention to all their guest question, suggestion and requests
5	Empathy	Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1985; AlRousan, 2011	Empathy is the service quality mode that stresses on the contacting of guest's as modified

(HM government, 2007) although good research can be used for performance management and to meet statutory requirements which is the most successful guest measurement programmes that is motivated by the desire to put customer focus at the spirit of an organisation. Guest focused organisations view guest satisfaction measurement as a means rather than an end part of a cycle of continuous improvement in service delivery and as a part of the wider toolkit of guest insight techniques. Many hotels regularly track their level of guest satisfaction to monitor performance over time and measure the impact of service improvement activity. Guest satisfaction measurement allows hotels to understand the issues or key drivers that cause the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a service experience. When hotel is able to understand how to satisfy its guest and why, it can focus its time and resources more effectively. Guest satisfaction measurement can help hotels to understand what it can and cannot control. Most importantly, guest satisfaction measurement helps hotels to focus on its customers, and should stimulate research staff, policy, strategy, customer-facing staff and service owners around the aim of improving the customer experience.

GUEST ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

In the hotel industry satisfaction of guests is based on the customer happiness with the service and the customer relations developed by hotel staff (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Al Rousan, 2011). Guest satisfaction is considered as one of the most vital outcomes of all marketing activities in a market oriented firm. The clear objective of satisfying a customer is to gain higher market share, expand a business and to obtain repeat and transfer business, all of which lead to improved abundance (Carev, 2008; Barsky, 1992). On the other hand, the guest satisfaction concept refers to judgement that depends on both good service quality and fitness of service to the needs of guests (Tse, et al., 1988). (Parasuraman, et al., 1988) guest satisfaction is the level in which expectation of a guest is to meet or exceed. Guest satisfaction is the assessment of a guest to meet his expectations. If the performance falls below expectations it makes guests dissatisfied (Kottler, et al., 2006). (Carev, 2008) defines service quality satisfaction based on the whole thought by a guest of the compensation of a service taking into account perceptions of what is engaged and what is specified. (Parasuraman, et al. 1988b) service providers should be able to understand the performance and needs of guests to be able to know how to satisfy them. (Cheung, et al., 1998) developed a new model for the measurement of hospitality service quality that incorporates performance of hotel employees in the service quality level. Service quality for the customer satisfaction model can be directly integrated into the hospitality total quality operation because service quality is a basic component of total quality (Cheung, et al., 1998). Hence the three main aspects that is TQM, service quality and guest satisfaction are interlinked and to be given the maximum importance in service operations in the hotel industry. The Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement released a research paper, "Testing the Internal Marketing Model: An Empirical Analysis of the Relationship between Employee Attitudes, Customer Attitudes, and Customer Spending," which studied the factors that influence guest satisfaction and spending. According to the research paper, the answer to improving guest satisfaction comes from the attitude of the staff, which can have a significant negative or positive impact on the guest experience.

Digital touch points will no doubt continue to increase; each one needs greater personalization and dynamic targeting to deliver greater relevance and timely content for customers. This can only be delivered through greater data management, insight and quality management of hotel company interactions with customers. This is within the control of a brand; it needs to manage this and then seek ways to track and react. The blend of the two is what the new world of customer engagement and satisfaction will be about. The conventional approach to building guest satisfaction tends to be throughout the use of material labour and to some extent this is still the case. Still technology has provided hotels with many opportunities to improve the level of service throughout the guest journey or stay at the hotel. It is very important to consider an amount of recent technological advances and the remuneration which provides to hotels and guest service quality. Even though technology is used in hotel rooms and throughout the hotel and its facilities, perhaps it plays a far more significant role in assembling guest information to increase guest satisfaction. This is predominantly the case for big full service hotels which needs guest information in order to surpass expectations and build trustworthiness. Technology which is at the vanguard of the hotel industry includes the use of touch print technology and Closed-circuit television (CCTV). The use of finger prints that is linked to property management systems that provide many benefits for both the hotel and the guest (Kang, et al, 2007). The guest will be capable to use a finger to check-in, pay for items in multiple outlets, enter their room and check out. This will allow the guest to be free from carrying forms of payment, identification details and room keys while staying at the hotel. The hotel will also see a lot of benefits from this particular technology. Initially, room keys or key cards will not require to be purchased, which frequently are costly to buy (Kang, et al, 2007). Hotels will also be able to collect forms of guest cleverness on rudiments such as retail purchases, food and beverage preferences, time spent in room and in hotel amenities. This provides opportunities to examine guest preferences and eventually exceed guest expectations (Domke-Damonte, et al., 2002; Chathoth, 2006).

CCTV works very much in the similar way yet it adds an amount of remuneration as guest's performance in the hotel can be twisted into data and figures. For example *Crowne Plaza at Dulles Airport* has experienced the use of CCTV to add signage to the hotel to avoid guest irritation. This would also allow hotel managers to reconsider amenities and assess how effectual they are when peaking periods are and how guests experience the hotel (Kirby, 2009). Other forms of technology include self-service check-in facilities which can be trim down check-in time from more or less 10 minutes to 60 seconds (Caterer, et al., 2009). In a number of cases a guest can check-in using wireless devices once inward bound at the hotel (Chathoth, 2006). This possibly will be made easier for guests in the future who could check-in from home and working on a similar system as airline companies. If this works in digression with finger print technology then it is expected that a guest will be given a time for when the room will be ready and the guest will be able to sidestep any form of check-in procedure once arriving at the hotel. This would work predominantly well in business where guests can frequently arrive very late in the sunset. These forms of technology benefit the operations of the hotel (Mintzberg, 1979). (Sigala, et al, 2000) promotes these forms of technology as standardisation of work. This also involves fundamentals of reduce the level of skill required to carry out the job (deskilling) which need less technical input from physical labour. A famous example of deskilling is McDonalds who challenge to deskill every level of its operations to promote competence (Ritzer, 2006). This provides a amount of remuneration for hotels including increased efficiency, reduce dependence for skilled labour and reduced labour costs. Nevertheless, in several cases this may not have any significant impact on guest satisfaction as it can be argued that it is very much charge on the type of hotel and the guests which it attracts.

Technology Based Self-Service replacing Traditional Human Touch Service has become a trend in hospitality industry. There are many reasons that show the way to this trend, though there are values in Traditional Human Touch Service that are unique by the Technology Based Self-Service. Those values might not be spoken clearly through numbers such as return on asset or output but then they are still very important to generate customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In actual fact, there seems to be a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty customer profitability (Helgesen, 2006). Consequently, Traditional Human Touch Service can still be very profitable. While hoteliers try to keep up with the Technology Based Self-Service trend, they must understand its effect on customers and the industry. In adding up, hoteliers must not forget the benefits of Traditional Human Touch Service, particularly those unique elements that cannot be replaced by the technologies.

Technology Based Self-Service is a shape of service that delivers by the customers to themselves through communication with technological systems (Beatson, et al., 2006). Even though sometime customers might still check with employees for the use of the self service systems, self service technology has helped to reduce the amount of workers used in the hospitality industry. (Shaw, 2004), people are not recognizable to this kind of service; some revolutionary hotels had already implemented the self check in kiosks to test the customer's response. Technologies helped to contribute to the front desk workload and speeded up the service therefore, hoteliers wished to add more service to the kiosks. Though, there was an anxiety that too many service options might increase the time people stand in front of the kiosks and indirectly lead to long line in front of the kiosks, lengthen the service process and time. Nowadays, more hotels have joined this practice but the service options in self service kiosks around front desks stay very simple. Though, there are more self service technologies in the hotel industry, such as self condition systems and self check out system on room service ordering system, hotel television, self serving in room mini bar, flight check-in kiosks and boarding pass printing.

Traditional Human Touch Service is the type of service that most people are well-known with, which is the service that are provided by the front line workers to the customers (Bitner, 1990). Front line workers act together with customers to learn about customer's needs, troubles and other information then deliver the requested service to the guests. Nowadays some services providers will ask their workers to go above and beyond to shock or wow their customers. They will try to do more than the guests have asked and expected, therefore to increase customer satisfaction. According to researchers "people factor" can be the most crucial factor that affect overall customers' satisfaction and repurchase intention (Ganesh, et al., 2000).

HOTEL INDUSTRY AND SERVICE QUALITY MODELS

Service quality models aim is to enable the organization or management to understand and improve the quality of the organization and its contribution (Seth, N., Deshmukh, S. G., 2004). Researchers and managers succeed in learning details about components of service quality in their organization of clear reasons of customer satisfaction, increased profitability etc. Service quality models gain specific importance as it not only helps in learning the factors linked with it but also will provide a way for improvements. The main purpose of service quality model is to find out how applicable these models are in the context of how consumers perceive service quality and whether they are satisfied with services offered by the service providers (Daniel, C, N., et al., 2010). The below models can be applicable to the hotel industry and they are;

TABLE: 1.4

Models	Authors	applications
Technical and functional quality model	Gronroos, 1984	Service quality depends on image, technical and functional quality of the organization. Well-designed (functional) quality is more important than the technical quality because functional quality is the outcome of technical quality.
GAP model	Berry, <i>et al.</i> , 1985	The model is an investigative tool. It enables the management to identify methodically service quality gaps between a numbers of variables affecting the quality of the contribution. The outcome of the model is outwardly focused. It is capable of supporting the management to identify the relevant service quality factors from the viewpoint of the consumer
Attribute service quality model	Haywood, <i>et al.</i> , 1988	This model provides a pedestal of segregating service organization on three dimensions for better management of quality. The model has the possible to enhance understanding of the concepts of service quality and help to guide about targeting towards the right customer section. The outcome of the model is useful for both in the design stage and periodically as the service and possibly customer taste develop.
Performance only model	Cronin, <i>et al.</i> , 1992	Service quality should be conceptualized and calculated as an attitude. The performance based SERVPERF is well-organized in comparison with SERVQUAL, as it in a straight line reduces the number of items by 50 per cent and the results are improved. The outcome of the model is service quality is a precursor of customer satisfaction and may have an enhanced effect on purchase intentions than service quality.
Ideal value model of service quality	Mattsson, 1992	This model incorporates and explains the importance of varied components of the service encounter to be calculated. This model provides a new knowledge viewpoint on how an ideal standard can be formed and how it can be continued mentally. The outcome of the model highlights attention to the importance of negative disconfirmation experience as a determinant for satisfaction result.
IT alignment model	Gupta and Berkley, 1994	This model describes how IT can be used to get better customer service along with key service quality dimensions including security, responsiveness, competence, reliability, communication, understanding the customer and access. The model outcome can help the organizations to understand the complete advantage of using information systems for delivering improved service quality. Allows managers to appreciate the usually used technologies in their industry and decide appropriate technology suiting their needs.
Attribute and overall affect model	Dabholkar, 1996	The quality based model is favoured in forming the evaluations of service quality for TBSS options. On the whole effect, this model outcome is also supported but it does not add further descriptive power to the attribute based model.
Model of perceived service quality and satisfaction	Spreng, <i>et al.</i> , 1996	This model results that service quality and customer satisfaction are separate and desires congruency does influence customer satisfaction. A key determinant of customer satisfaction and service quality is meeting customer requirements. Increasing expectations have a positive effect on customer satisfaction perceptions of presentation, but they also have a negative effect on customer satisfaction through disconfirmation.
PCP (Pivotal, Core, Peripheral) attribute model	Hazlett, <i>et al.</i> , 1997	This model results provides an effective, general and simple framework of assessing service quality for any service sector. Things to see the area of improvements for service quality depending on the incidence of meet. The dimensions to these three levels of attributes are individual sector dependent and with reference to customer.
Service quality, customer value and customer satisfaction model	Oh, 1999	The model can be used as a structure for understanding customer decision process as well as evaluating company recital. This model provides an outcome instructions and targets for customer oriented company labours.
Antecedents and mediator model	Dabholkar, <i>et al.</i> , 2000	Customers assess different factors related to the service but also shape a separate overall evaluation of the service quality. The antecedent's model can provide complete sympathetic of service quality and how these evaluations are formed. Customer satisfaction is a better forecaster of behavioural intentions. The model outcomes a strong mediating role was established, confirming that it is significant to calculate customer satisfaction independently from service quality when trying to determine customer evaluations of service.
Internal service quality model	Frost, <i>et al.</i> , 2000	The model results the perceptions and outlook of internal customers and suppliers engage in recreating a main role in recognizing the level of internal service quality professed.
Internal service quality DEA (Data Envelop Analysis) model	Soteriou, <i>et al.</i> , 2000	The model result indicates the possessions, which can be better utilized to create higher service quality levels.
IT-based model	Zhu, <i>et al.</i> , 2002	IT-based services have a direct impact on the assurance, responsiveness and reliability dimensions and an indirect impact on customer happiness and perceived service quality IT can help service providers achieve higher level of customer Satisfaction. The model results the customer evaluation of IT-based services is affected by preference towards past experience in IT-based services, perceived IT policies and traditional services
Model of e-service quality	Santos, 2003	The model results provides a better perceptive of e-service quality and consequently to attain high customer preservation, profitability, and customer satisfaction. This e-service quality model can be of help to all companies that connect e-commerce or plan to do so.

Source: Adapted from Seth, N., Deshmukh, S. G., (2004)

The models wrap the domain from conservative personalized services to the internet-enabled services including the organizational and behavioural aspects. These models provide a useful framework for service quality. There are certain factors which are seemed to be suitable for comparative evaluations of the service quality models and they are:

- Recognition of factors affecting service quality.
- Appropriateness for variety of services in consideration.
- Flexibility to account for changing nature of customers perceptions.
- Directions for improvement in service quality.
- Suitability to develop a link for measurement of customer satisfaction.
- Diagnosing the needs for training and education of employees.
- Flexible enough for modifications as per the changes in the environment/conditions.
- Suggests suitable measures for improvements of service quality both upstream and downstream the organization in focus.
- Identifies future needs (infrastructure, resources) and thus provide help in planning.
- Accommodates use of IT in services.
- Capability to be used as a tool for benchmarking.

A firm in order to compete fruitfully must have an understanding of customer perception of the quality and the way service quality is prejudiced. Service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimensions (Berry, *et al.*, 1985). To conclude with these models can be

useful in hotel industry and it is noted that the models have a focus only on one link that is either marketer to consumer or front-line staff to supporting staff. (Caruana, *et al.*, 1997; Reynoso, *et al.*, 1995) on other side, researchers have continuously pointed out the positive correlation of internal service quality considering all the processes and operations associated in delivery of product or service with business performance and the service quality delivered to the customer including the marketing, distribution and other support functions.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND INDUSTRY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

From the diverse service quality tools, dimensions and models, the study states that right through the 1980s it was accepted that meeting customer's expectations would lead to customer satisfaction and which would lead to repeat business. But in 1990s research began to show that achieving customer satisfaction may not lead to customer loyalty. As a result researchers began to find new models to study and formulate model for improvement of customer engagement, satisfaction and retention. This preliminary study focuses on the theory, well-known and popular service quality tool (SERVQUAL), models and dimensions together and also highlights on various issues, debates, strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the service quality. This study also focuses on how essential is guest engagement, satisfaction and technology in further improving service quality and hence improving total quality management in Hotel Industry. This study proposes to explore the scope to which a service quality improvement model can be widely used in hotel sector specifically in Indian Hotel Industry. The study institutes how the benefits of service quality from this research can be utilized and extends the understanding of improving service and provide strong base to industry for further enhancement of service quality. This study discusses the dimensions and different models and theories to help develop service improvement model which will facilitate employee satisfaction to enhance job performance and also guest engagement and satisfaction to boost business and further sparks the present hospitality players to improve upon their service quality. The limitation of this study is the preliminary study did not cover all available service quality literature and dimensions of SERVQUAL.

GLOSSARY

1. **TQM** – total quality management; it is an integrative viewpoint of an organization for continuously improving the quality of products and processes.
2. **SERVQUAL** – service quality; SERVQUAL or RATER is a service quality structure. SERVQUAL means to measure the scale of quality in the service sectors.
3. **SERVPERF**- service performance; SERVPERF is a service quality structure and it is to measure the scale of service performance in the service sector.
4. **LQI** – Lodging quality index; Scale of lodging quality in the service sector.
5. **HOLSERV**- Holiday service; Scale of service in hospitality industry.
6. **CCTV** – closed circuit television
7. **TBSS** – Technology based self-service; it is a form of service that delivers by the customers to themselves through communication with technological systems.
8. **THTS** – Traditional Human Touch Service; it is the service that are provided by the front line workers to the customers

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