

Analysis of Service Quality Gaps:- A study of Punjab Police

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Abstract - This study aims to find out the service quality gaps about the police services or police department. It seeks to study the difference between the image perceptions of police after call on 100 number helpline number and call on 100 number helpline number. To collect the data questionnaire had been developed on the brand personality factors (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, sophistication and Ruggedness) and distributed among the public (Sample size 200). The data collected has been analyzed using SPSS software and for mean difference used to calculate the gap difference between the expectation and perception of service provided by police department . The study provides an insight into which factors are more important when public receiving services of police department and calling on helpline number 100.

Keywords- Brand image, Services, Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, sophistication and Ruggedness

I. INTRODUCTION

Services quality can be defined as “An assessment of how well a delivered **service** conforms to the client's expectations”. **Service quality** helps to measure how well a service is delivered, compared to customer expectations. **Services** providers assess the **service quality** provided to their customers to improve their **service quality**, to quickly identify problems, and to better assess client satisfaction. Service quality is the customer's overall impression or assessment concerning the relative inferiority or superiority of the organization and its services (Zeithaml, 1988; Bitner and Hubbert, 1994). It is measurable by the comparison of customers' expectations with customers' perceptions of actual service performance (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

A gap is created when there is a difference between the perceptions of the delivered service and the expectations of the customer. This gap is identified implementing strategies that affect perceptions, or expectations, or both (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1990). Parasuraman et al. (1988) stated that SERVQUAL has been designed to be “applicable across a broad spectrum of services” and the format could be adapted to fit specific needs, and that it would be most valuable when used to track service quality trends periodically. They proposed that the SERVQUAL model could be extended to measure gaps in quality and could therefore be used as a diagnostic tool to enable management to identify service quality shortfalls. The gap score is calculated with the deduction of the perception statements from the expectation statements. If in the result any gap scores turn out to be positive then this implies that expectations are actually being exceeded. This allows service managers to review whether they need to re-deploy resources to areas of underperformance (Wisniewski, 2001).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality can be defined as an overall judgment similar to attitude towards the service and generally accepted as an antecedent of overall customer satisfaction (Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996). Parasuraman et al. (1988) is defined service quality as the ability of the company to meet or exceed customer expectations. It is the gap between customer expectations of service and perceived service (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Perceived service quality results from differences of customer's expectations with their perceptions of service delivered by the suppliers of services (Zeithaml et al., 1990). If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman 1985; Lewis and Mitchell, 1990).

Service quality is determined by consumers themselves, and occurs when an organization provides services that meet the needs of consumers (Metters et al. 2004). Service quality has a complex and multidimensional structure (Lee, 2013). However, over the past twenty or so years, there has been a great deal of research in this area, for example, the SERVQUAL structure of service quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). They define service quality as the difference between the level of service expected by customers and the actual level of service, and propose ten major dimensions influencing service quality. Subsequently, Parasuraman et al. (1988) reduce the number of dimensions influencing service quality, producing a five-dimensional scale. Although subsequent research has proposed revisions to the SERVQUAL model (Lee, 2011), this research is still based on the same framework..

Need of the study

Always there exists an important question: why should service quality be measured? Measurement allows for comparison before and after changes, for the location of quality related problems and for the establishment of clear standards for service delivery. Edvardsen *et al.* (1994) state that, in their experience, the starting point in developing quality in services is analysis and measurement of Police services in the state of Punjab. The SERVQUAL approach, which is studied in this paper is the most common method for measuring service quality.

The SERVQUAL method from Valarie A. Zeithaml, A. Parasuraman, and Leonard L. Berry is a technique that can be used for performing a gap analysis of an organization's service quality performance against customer service quality needs.

Objective

The followings are the objectives for the study of gap in services provided by state police department in Punjab:-

- To identify and compare the gap between public expectation and perception about police services.

III. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design has been used and Primary data has been collected mainly through structured questionnaire with 7 point Likert's scale. The sample size was 200. The data has been collected from three cities of Punjab (Mohali, Patiala and Fatehgarh sahib) using convenience sampling methods. The collected data has been analyzed by using SPSS software with statistical tools.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected Data has been analyzed after editing and tabulation in SPSS software. The mean has been calculated and comparison of means is as below:-

Service Quality Gaps Score for Police Services By Punjab Public

sr. no.	Dimensions	N	PERCEPTION		EXPECTATION			GAP SCORE
			Mean	Standard Deviation		Mean	Standard Deviation	P-E
Reliability			Reliability			Reliability		
1	Do local police staff/officials' keep promises regarding safety, security and other services?	195	4.99	1.27	Keeping promises regarding safety, security and other services ?	6.29	.95	-1.29
2	Are local police staff/officials' sincere in solving problems of public/complainants?	195	4.75	1.41	Sincerity in solving problems of public/complainants	6.32	.95	-1.57
3	Do local police staff/officials' Provide effective services to public/complainants at the very first interaction?	195	4.66	1.49	Providing effective service to public/complainants at very first interaction?	6.24	1.04	-1.57
4	Do local police staff/officials provide timely services/assistance to public/complainants?	195	4.61	1.55	Providing timely services/ assistance to public ?	6.23	.98	-1.62
5	Do you think that record keeping is Error free?	195	4.27	1.62	Error free clean record keeping	6.21	1.05	-1.94
Average Gap Score								-1.66
Assurance			Assurance			Assurance		Assurance
6	Are local police staff/officials' behavior and demeanor towards public/complainants good?	195	4.39	1.59	Behavior and demeanor of police officials and staff towards public/	6.11	1.07	-1.72

					complainants ?			
7	Do you think complainants/public feel a sense of safety while interaction with police staff?	195	4.54	1.57	sense of safety among public while interaction with police staff	6.17	1.14	-1.63
8	Are local police staff/officials' courteousness towards public/complainants?	195	4.48	1.42	courteousness of police staff towards public	6.19	1.08	-1.71
9	Are your local police officials/staff members properly aware and knowledgeable to address the queries of public/complainants?	195	4.67	1.47	appropriate awareness and knowledge for police staff to	6.25	.93	-1.58
Average Gap Score								-1.66
Empathy				Empathy				Empathy
10	Do you think police services accessible to public/complainant during time of need?	195	4.61	1.52	Accessibility / Reach of public / complainant to police services during time of need	6.26	1.00	-1.65
11	Do police staff members show personalized attention towards complainants/public?	195	4.34	1.52	Personalized attention towards complainants/ Public	6.09	1.00	-1.74
12	Does local police express empathy towards public/complainant's interests?	195	4.41	1.57	Having and expressing empathy towards public	6.01	1.02	-1.61
13	Do local police show their understanding of specific needs of complainants/public?	195	4.51	1.50	Understanding specific needs of complainants/Public	6.09	.98	-1.58
Average Gap Score								-1.64
Responsiveness				Responsiveness				Responsiveness
14	Does police properly communicate public regarding exact timing of services/action?	195	4.55	1.52	Proper communication regarding exact timing of police actions	6.15	1.09	-1.60
15	Does police take prompt action towards the needs of complainants/public?	195	4.65	1.52	promptness in taking actions towards the need of public	6.07	1.06	-1.42
16	Do they have willingness to take prompt action toward the needs of public/complainants?	195	4.69	1.46	Willingness to take prompt actions towards the needs of public	6.12	.83	-1.44
17	Are police officers and staff never too busy to respond to requests of public/complainants?	195	4.54	1.45	Police officers an staff never too busy to respond requests of public	6.05	.98	-1.51
Average Gap Score								-1.49
Tangibility				Tangibility				Tangibility

18	Are police force and related services equipped with modern technology?	195	4.41	1.55	Police force and related services equipped with modern technology	6.25	.88	-1.84
19	Does your police have effective communication and support material e.g Applications, websites, wireless etc.	195	4.49	1.72	effective communication and support material e.g Applications, websites, wireless etc.	6.17	.93	-1.68
20	Are your police officers and staff smart?	195	4.50	1.54	smart police officers and staff	5.90	1.42	-1.40
21	Are the ambiances of police facilities effective?	195	4.33	1.56	Effective ambience of police facilities	6.05	1.04	-1.72
Average Gap Score								-1.66

The views of the sample respondents of public of Punjab state regarding the services offered by the police department under study are presented in the above table . Referring to the table; comparison between the expectations and perception of police services, it is observed that the public have very dissatisfactions from the service quality provided by the police department to them with average gap score of -1.61 . According to different dimensions, assurance and tangibility have the highest gap score -1.66 shows the poor service quality to public, where as empathy has gap score -1.64, reliability with gap score -1.6, and least gap score -1.49 by responsiveness as compare to other dimensions. The error free record keeping factor again shows highest gap (-1.91) on individual basis in the reliability dimension. In tangibility, due to lack of technology advancement and awareness it show a high gap score in technology services (-1.84) and (-1.74) gap score for ambience for effective services .

The empathy dimension comprises of police empathy towards complaints and public, personalized attention towards problems of public, understanding of public needs also have high gap score (-1.61,-1.71 and -1.58 respectively). It can be analyzed from the results that police is not giving personalized attention towards the public or public complaints and poor understating of public problems which is very necessary to deliver the quality services .

In context with assurance dimensions of service quality, includes behavior and demeanor of police officials, courteousness, knowledge and intelligence level of police also reported a average gap score of (-1.66). on the other hand responsiveness dimension reports a gap score of (-1.47) least score as compare to other dimensions. It shows that in taking prompt actions police is good but not as per expectations of the public.

So it is important to satisfy the public for the police to take the corrective measures in the dimensions where they are not performing as per the above collected sample's data.

Service GAP Summary

Sr. no.	Dimensions	Average Gap Score	Rank
1	Reliability	-1.6	3
2	Assurance	-1.66	1
3	Empathy	-1.64	2
4	Responsiveness	-1.49	4
5	Tangibility	-1.66	1
	Total	-8.05	-
	Un-weighted score (Average Gap Score/ 5)	-1.61	-

The summary of results reveals that among all five dimensions of service quality , tangibility and assurance shows the highest gap followed by empathy, reliability and responsiveness respectively (-1.66, -1.66,-1.64,-1.60 and -1.49). the un-weighted score's average score calculated by sum of all average of dimensions by 5 is also showing a high gap score (-1.61) between service quality expectations and perception in the mind of public about police services of Punjab .

V. CONCLUSION

From the present study it can be concluded that there is a high difference between expectation and perception of police services among the public of Punjab state , weather, they have called on police helpline on 100 and availed the service or not called or not availed the service of police department. Both the groups have same difference in perception and beliefs about the police department in their minds and perceived services and expected or expecting from the department. On other side police department also need to work to built up and sustain it's a good image among public with better services that will help them in the same.

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