

## Lecture 8: Service Quality

### 1. Concept of Service Quality:

The definition of service quality primarily revolves around the benefits that a service provides to the customer, i.e., the customer's perception of the quality of the service delivered. Service quality also depends on the customer's current experience and previous experiences, meaning that it is not solely based on comparing expected quality with perceived quality. (Perceived quality refers to the quality through which the consumer evaluates services; it represents the consumer's overall judgment regarding the excellence or superiority of the service.)

According to Grönroos, service quality has two fundamental dimensions:

- **Technical quality:** This refers to the quantitative aspects of the service, i.e., those aspects that can be expressed numerically.
- **Functional quality:** This pertains to the manner in which the technical quality is delivered to the service recipient.

### 2. Dimensions of Quality:

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry argue that the only standards used to evaluate service quality are those determined by the service recipient. These researchers identified nine criteria that customers use to judge the quality of service: reliability, service availability (in terms of time and place), safety, credibility, the service provider's understanding of the customer, responsiveness, competence, tangibles, and communication.

The first five criteria relate to the quality of the final benefits received by the customer, while the remaining criteria pertain to the quality of the service delivery process itself.

The three researchers then consolidated these criteria into five core dimensions of service quality:

1. Tangibles
2. Reliability
3. Responsiveness
4. Assurance
5. Empathy

### 3. Models of Service Quality:

In practice, there are two primary models for measuring service quality, both of which are based on the gap between expected service and perceived service. In other words, these models rely on customer perceptions and expectations, which lead to satisfaction.

#### A. The Traditional Gap Model:

This model was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry and is known as the Gap Model. It is based on the size of the gap between customer expectations and the perceived actual service quality. The model, formulated according to the traditional concept of service quality, includes five gaps:

1. The gap between customer expectations and management perception;
2. The gap between management perception and service quality specifications;
3. The gap between service quality specifications and service delivery;
4. The gap between service delivery and external communications;

5. The gap between perceived service and expected service.

**B. The Extended Gap Model:**

This model is fundamentally similar to the traditional model but specifies seven gaps instead of five. It was developed by Lovelock and later presented by Lovelock & Wirt. This extended model is considered more detailed, as it includes indicators that were not present in the traditional model.

The seven gaps in this model are:

1. Knowledge gap
2. Standards gap
3. Delivery gap
4. Internal communications gap
5. Perception gap
6. Interpretation gap
7. Service gap