CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality

Definition of Service

Service had been studied by multi-academic disciplines including operations management, marketing, human resource management, and organizational behavior. From the economic perspective, Haksever, Render, Russell, and Murdick (1999) defined service as "economic activity that produces time, place, form, or psychological utilities" (p.3). They described further that services could save customers' time (e.g. mid service), provide convenient outlets (e.g. department stores), provide more usable form of information (e.g. database service), and provide psychological refreshment (e.g. holiday service).

Kotler and Keller (2006, p. 136) mentioned that whether the buyer is satisfied after purchase any service depends on the offer's performance in relation to the buyer's expectations. In general, satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted.

From an operational perspective, service was viewed as a process where input was processed to output. Morris and Johnston as cited in Lovelock (1991) specified three types of inputs: customers, materials, and information. Lovelock (1991) proposed that services has three components – people processing, possession processing, and information processing – and later added mental stimulus processing. Table 1 provides examples of these services.

Table 1 Understanding the nature of the service act

What is the Nature of the Service Act?	Who or What is the Direct Recipient of the Service?	
	People	Possessions
Tangible Actions	People processing (Service directed at people's bodies):	Possession processing (Service directed at physical possessions):
	Passenger transportation	Freight transportation
	Health care	Repair and maintenance
	Lodging	Warehousing/ storage
	Beauty salons	Office cleaning services
	Physical therapy	Retail distribution
	Fitness center	Laundry and dry cleaning
	Restaurant/ bars	Refueling
	Barbers	Landscaping/ gardening
	Funeral services	Disposal/ recycling
Intangible Actions	Mental stimulus processing (Service directed at people's minds):	Information processing (Service directed at intangible assets):
	Advertising/ PR	Accounting
	Arts and entertainment	Banking
	Broadcasting/ cable	Data processing
	Management consulting	Data transmission
	Education	Insurance
	Information services	Legal services
	Music concerts	Programming
	Psychotherapy	Research
	Religion	Securities investment
	Voice telephone	Software consulting

Source: Lovelock (2007, p.38)

Service had been commonly viewed as the opposite side of goods along a continuum. Analyzing the categories of products on a product continuum that was titled 'a tangibility spectrum', Shostack (1977) as cited in Reisinger (2008) classified services according to the degree of intangibility. Blomer et al. (1999) specified from the intangibility perspective that goods were referred to as an object, a device, or a thing, whereas service was a deed, a performance, or an effort. In practice, it was difficult to completely separate service from goods. Goods purchase was almost always accompanied by supporting services. Similarly, service purchase was almost always accompanied by supporting goods (Haksever, et al., 1999). To distinguish the differences between services and goods, Lovelock (1991) provided seven generic differences between goods and service in a marketing domain which included nature of the product, greater involvement of customers in the process, people as part of the product, greater difficulties in maintaining quality control standards, absence of inventories, relative importance of the time factor, and the structure of distribution channels. Gronroos (1983) distinguished services into two dimensions: a technical outcome dimension and a functional outcome dimension. The technical outcome dimension was the type (*what*) of service delivered to consumers. The functional outcome dimension was the process (*how*) by which service is delivered. Most of service and service quality literatures examined the later dimension. Service was also perceived as a system which a service organization must provide.

The service system comprises service operation system, service marketing system, and service delivery system (Lovelock, 1991). The service system is demonstrated in Figure 1. The operations system embraced resources to create services and run the service operations. The resources included personnel, facilities, and equipment. First, the service marketing system incorporated marketing efforts and activates for the service delivery system. Next, the service delivery system involved place, time, and method to provide services. Lastly, the service marketing system was included in the service delivery system.
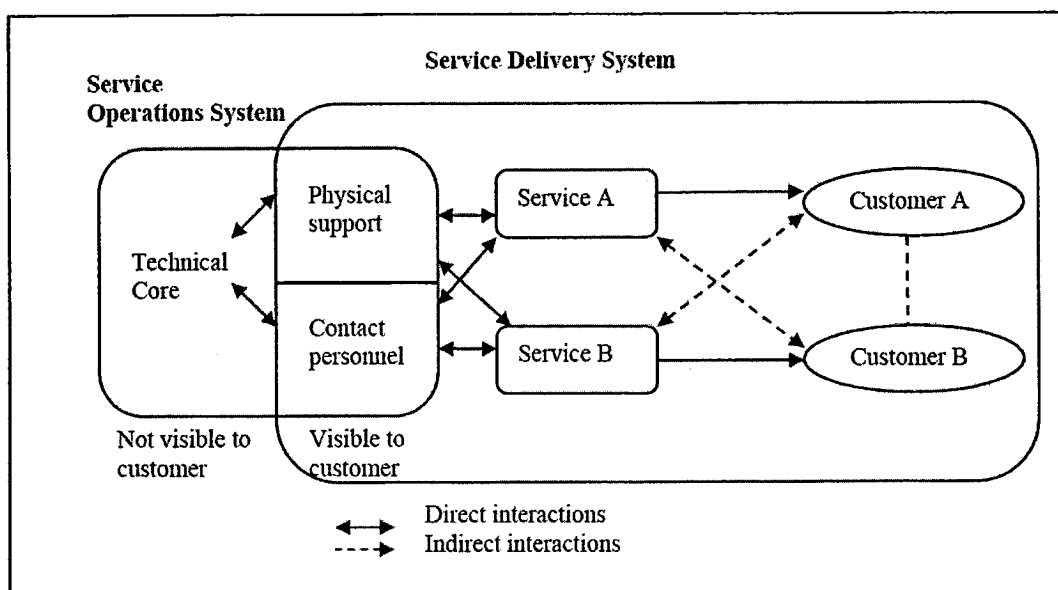
Figure 2 The Service Business as a System

Source: Lovelock, 1991, p.14 adapted from Eric Langeard, John E. G. Bateson, Christopher H. Lovelock, and Pierre Eiglier, *Services Marketing: New Insights from Consumers and Managers,* Cambridge, Mass./ Marketing Science Institute, 1981.

In addition, services had been distinguished from goods by considering the degree to which the four unique characteristics of services exist. They were intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability. A number of researchers documented these characteristics in their studies (Zeithaml, Parasuramen and Berry, 1990; Based on Zeithaml, et al., 1990; Hoffman and Bateson, 1997, pp. 24-35) defined these characteristics as following

1. Intangibility: A distinguishing characteristic of services that makes them unable to be touched or sensed in the same manner as physical goods.

2. Inseparability: A distinguishing characteristic of services that reflects the interconnection among the service provider, the customer involved in receiving the service, and other customers sharing the service experience.

3. Heterogeneity: A distinguishing characteristic of services that reflects the variation in consistency from on service transaction to the next

4. Perishability: A distinguishing characteristic of services in that they cannot be saved, their unused capacity cannot be reserved, and they cannot be inventoried. Challenges created by these characteristics did not only play significant roles for developing service strategies of service organizations, but they also made it difficult for customers to evaluate services and their quality. All of these characteristics are seen in the hospitality services.

Reisinger and Movondo (2005) described hospitality as the provision of accommodation and catering (food and beverage) services for guests that included both tourists and local residents. The author also mentioned the quality of hospitality services implying that guests were to be treated with empathy, kindness, and friendliness, and there was also a concern for their well-being and satisfaction. In addition, Reisinger and Movondo (2005) stated that a few tourism and hospitality services were either purely tangible or intangible. They were mixtures of products and services; most had high degrees of intangibility. The customers could not use all the five senses prior to the purchase. The hospitality services were produced and consumed simultaneously; therefore, they required the presence of both hospitality provider and customer. The services varied over times, persons, moods of both parties. Lastly, it was also impossible to store or save them for future purchase.

Furthermore, Reisinger (2008) explained the evaluation of services that existed in three stages: pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption. In the preconception stage, consumers made a choice among alternatives, but they rarely had cues to evaluate the service attribute before consuming. The causes might be that only a single brand was offered or the inability to get sufficient pre-purchase information. In the consumption stage, consumers started comparing the expectation and the experience; this action continued into the post-consumption stage. Although the service provided to the consumers mostly consisted of a series of actions and interactions, they evaluated the whole process, rather than evaluated each one separately.

Definition of Quality

In an attempt to cover quality in all sectors, Gagliano and Hathcote (1994) brought together the definitions of quality described by scholars from fields as diverse as philosophy, economics, marketing, and operations management. He classified the

quality definitions into five categorized perspectives. First, *Transcendent* perspective viewed quality as an innate excellence, which could be recognized only through experience. It could not be defined precisely, and thus it offered little practical guidance. Second, *Product-based* perspective viewed quality as precise and measurable quantities. It was highly effective on an objective nature, but failed in measuring subjective attributes. Third, *User-based* perspective considered quality from an individual customer's perspective which was highly subjective. Fourth, *Manufacturing-based* perspective viewed quality from production process or supply side by setting up a specification and considering product conformance. However, it recognized consumer's interest rather than simplifying the production process. Fifth, *Value-based* perspective viewed quality as the result of a balance between service performance and price or 'affordable excellence'.

Haksever, et al. (1999) noted that these categories reflected the application of quality in business functions.

Schneider and White (2004) commented that the quality based on philosophical (transcendent) approach was useless for research and practice since it was inexplicable and unquantifiable. In addition, defining quality from a technical (manufacturing or objective approach was well-suited to standardized products since it focused on the objective and the readily measurable. Moreover, the user-based approach was more attractive in order to define the quality of services because it was more appropriate to the subjective terms and the characteristics of service. They further suggested that because most services were supplied in a combination with goods, the technical approach should measure the *what* of service whereas the user-based approach was fitted for measuring the quality of the *how* of services.

Gagliano and Hathcote (1994) also indentified eight dimensions of quality as a framework for analysis. He stated that these dimensions provided the disaggregating concept of quality for businesses to attain and focus on some harmonizing dimensions because some of them could be achieved with the expense of the other. The eight dimensions were described as followings:

1. Performance refers to the primary operating characteristics of a product or service.

2. Features refer to the secondary characteristics that supplement the product's basic functioning.

3. Reliability refers to the probability of a product's malfunctioning or failing within a specified period of time.

4. Conformance refers to the degree to which a product's design and operating characteristics meet pre-established standards.

5. Durability refers to the amount of use one gets from a product before it physically deteriorates or before it breaks down.

6. Serviceability refers to the speed, courtesy, competence, and ease of repair.

7. Aesthetics refers to how a product looks, feels, sounds, tastes, or smells (most subjective).

8. Perceived Quality refers to indirect measures of quality comparison by using perception of quality i.e. images, advertising, and brand names rather than the reality itself (most subject)

Quality concept emerged far back in human history. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the importance of quality became apparent to the world, starting with the simple inspection by artisans and skilled craftsmen to more complicated statistical quality control and quality assurance in manufacturing companies Gagliano and Hathcote (1994). The statistical quality control included process control (using simple statistical techniques) and sampling techniques (checking a limited number of items within an acceptable range of defects).

Beyond the statistical point of view, quality control was extended to quality assurance the engaged quantifying the costs of quality, total quality control, reliability engineering, and zero defects. The costs of quality were controlled based on the premise that failure costs could be reduced significantly by investing in quality improvement (Juran, 1951 as cited in Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994). Rather than performance by the manufacturing department only to achieve quality in three main functions – new design control, incoming material control and product or ship floor control – the concept of total quality control necessitated the co-operation of multiple departments (Feignbaum, 1956 as cited in Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994). Reliability engineering was the control of quality that is anchored in probability theory and statistics with the assurance of acceptable product performance over time (the

Department of Defense, 1950 as cited by Gagliano and Hathcote, 1994). Zero defects introduced by Martin Company as cited in Gagliano and Hathcote (1994), awarded incentives to workers for lowering defects. Then a new approach to quality achievement, a so-called strategic quality management, was developed to respond to the needs of broader quality scope. Strategic quality management was the extension of the preceding quality movements. It was more comprehensive because it incorporated profitability and business strategies that were associated with competitive needs, customer viewpoint, and continuous quality improvement. Table 1 summarizes the quality movements as previously mentioned.

Table 2 The four major quality eras

Identifying Characteristics	Stage of the Quality Movement			
	Inspection	*Statistical Quality Control*	*Quality Assurance*	*Strategic Quality Management*
Primary concern	Detecting a problem to be solved	Control a problem to be solved	Coordinating a problem to be solved, but one that is attacked proactively	Strategic impact a competitive opportunity
Emphasis	Product uniformity	Product uniformity with reduced inspection	The entire production chain, from design to market, and the contribution of all functional groups, especially designers, to preventing quality faiures	The market and consumer needs
Methods	Gauging and measurement	Statistical tools and techniques	Programs and systems	Strategic planning, goal-setting, and mobilizing the organization
Role of quality professionals	Inspection, sorting counting, and grading	Troubleshooting and the application of statistical methods	Quality measurement, quality planning, and program design	Goal-setting, education and training, consultative work with other departments, and program design

Table 2 (cont.)

Identifying Characteristics	Stage of the Quality Movement			
	Inspection	*Statistical Quality Control*	*Quality Assurance*	*Strategic Quality Management*
Who has responsibility for quality?	The inspection department	The manufacturing and engineering departments	All documents, although top management is only peripherally involved in designing, planning, and executing quality policies	Every in the organization, with top management exercising strong leadership
Orientation and approach	"inspects in" quality	"controls in" quality	"builds in" quality	"manages in" quality

Source: Gagliano and Hathcote (1994), p. 63

Definition of Service Quality

According to the previous section, this study reviews the service quality from the user-based approach which focuses on satisfying the customers' quality need. Scholars have recognized and discussed service quality during the past few decades. Numerous service quality literatures have studied conceptualization, measurement, implementation, and management of the service quality. In the research, only the service quality concept and measurement and examined. The concept of service quality was established after there has been a growing interest in the quality of goods served. Gagliano and Hathcote (1994) was among the first scholars who examined the quality concepts to cover both goods and service as described in the preceding section.

Service quality was originally cultivated in the marketing context in which the customer was the focal point of the movement. As previously mentioned, Gagliano and Hathcote (1994) explained the perceived quality as the subjective perception of quality through indirect measures of quality comparison. Investigating the service quality development, Gronroos (1982) stated service quality has been developed based on the confirmation/disconfirmation concept of service quality he introduced in the "perceived service quality" model in 1982. The notion of the model explained that the perceived service quality was the result of comparing the real experience with the expectation of a customer before consuming the service. The model is illustrated in

figure 3. The perceived service quality is positive when the experience goes beyond the expectation and vice versa when expectations are not met. Additionally, he asserted customers had subjective views for the quality of service, thus an individual's meaning of good quality might be different from others. The empirical study of Gronholdt et al. (2000) similarly recognized that in general, people had diverse perceptions of the service quality definition as a result of their experiences, thus the service quality was obviously impossible to measure.

Figure 3 The Perceived Service Quality Model

Source: Gronroos, 1990, p.41 as cited in Gronroos, 1983

Based on the perceived service quality concept Parasuraman, et al. (1985) applied premises from other previous studies to form their model of quality. The ideas included a consumer has difficulty in evaluation service quality rather than goods quality, that a perception of service quality was developed from a comparison of consumer expectation with actual service performance, also quality evaluation involved the evaluation of both the process and outcome of service delivery (Gronroos, 1982; Lehtinen and Lehtinen, 1982; Lewis and Boom, 1983; Sasser, Olsen, and Wyckoff, 1978 as cited in Parasuraman, et al., 1985).

Consequently, the conceptual model study of Parasuraman, et al. (1985) presented 10 original determinants which included reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles. In their succeeding study, using the SERVQUAL measured some of these determinants were combined and only five dimensions remained (Parasuraman, et al., 1988). The five dimensions consisted of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The definitions of these five dimensions are as follows (Parasuraman, et al., 1988)

1. Reliability is defined as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

2. Responsiveness is defined as the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

3. Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

4. Empathy is defined as caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.

5. Tangibles concerns physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel.

In the exploratory research of Parasuraman, et al. (1993), a conceptual gap model of service quality was developed based on the difference between expectation and experience or the so-called "perceived service quality." It was derived by comparing customer expectation and perceived service performance. The fundamental notion was that the service quality was perceived as an overall evaluation or attitude toward and entire.

The gap model explained the existence of five service quality gaps due to differences between service quality sources. The five gaps included: (Gap 1) Customer expectations versus management perceptions of customer expectations; (Gap 2) Translation of perceptions into service quality specifications versus management perceptions of customer expectations; (Gap 3) Service delivery versus service quality specifications; (Gap 4) External communications to customers versus customer service quality perceptions (Figure 3). The perceived service quality (Gap 5) is the function of Gap1 through Gap 4. Haksever, Render, Russell, and Murdick

(1999) cited some risks of the gap model application found in several studies. They opined that customers always had expectations of high quality and those services that involved credence characteristics caused difficulty in service evaluation.

The gap model was intentionally developed to apply to a broad range of service industries. Scholars preferred specific measurements to evaluate the service quality of a certain industry. Also, Brown and Wartz (1989) recommended using a simpler model for professional services. However, the gap model was the basis for the development of many service quality measurements. More details of research studies on service quality measurements applied in various services industries are mentioned in the following section.
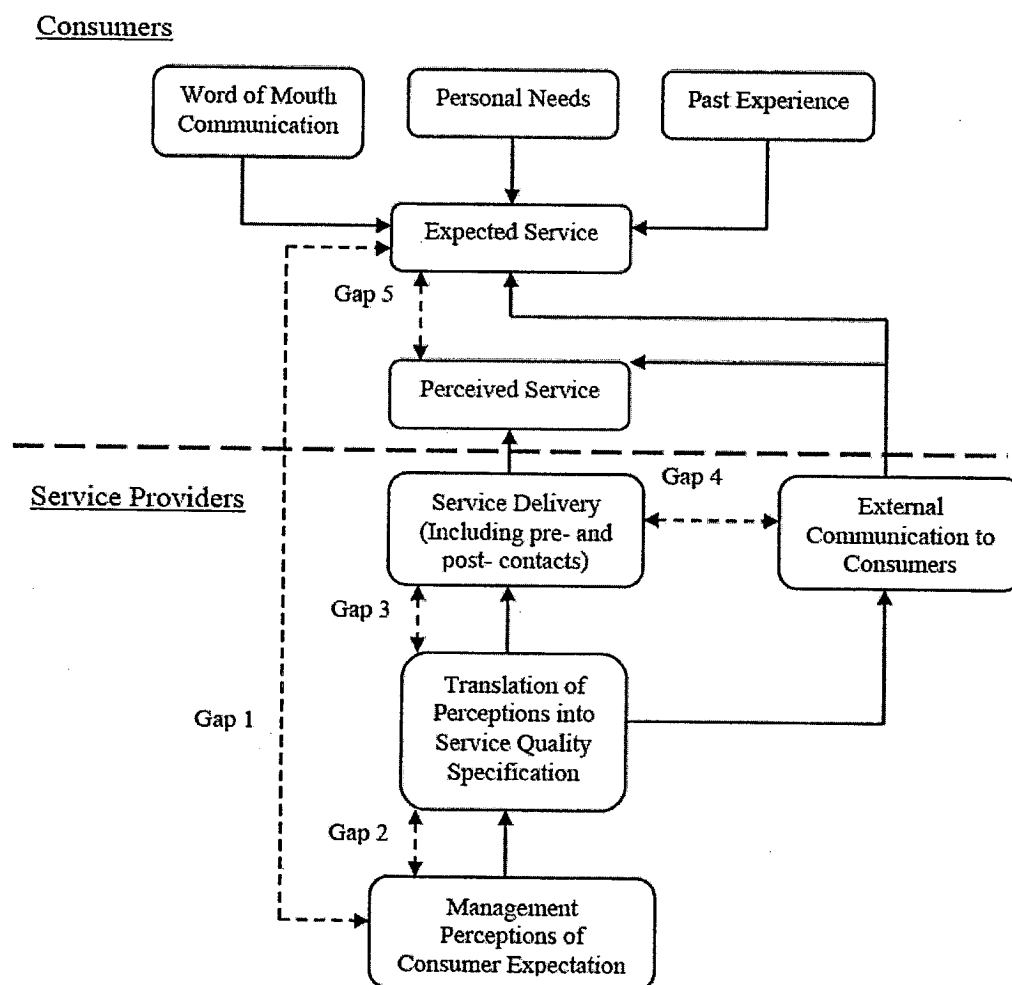
Figure 4 Service Quality Gap Model

Source: Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985, p.44

Service quality in hospitality industry

Literature involving service quality in the industry can be categorized into three major groups: human resource related, strategy and management related, and service quality measurement issues. Lewis (1989) and Cannon (2002) studied the implementation of internal service as the essence of high-service quality improvement in the hospitality industry. The study of team building among hotel employees was considered to improve customer relations and address operational problems, which resulted in service quality improvement (Berger and Vanger, 1986).

Hermon and Niteck (2001) investigated hospitality management's employee treatment to improve service quality delivered by their employees. Employee empowerment was also a vital issue with regard to service quality in hospitality industry. Lashley (1997) examined the employee empowerment in hospitality operations to improve the performance of front-line staff through empowerment initiatives shaped by managerial motives and perceptions. Due to the association with the service quality delivery and management, interpersonal work conflict stress and response were explored by Ross (1995). His subsequent research investigated potential employees' problem solving styles to predict their responses (Ross, 1995). Similarly, Garavan (1997) studied interpersonal skills training for improving quality service interactions. A number of researchers examined various aspects of the relationship between performance and service quality in hospitality industry (Maxwell and Lyle, 2002).

For the second group, a variety of subtopics related to the service organization's strategy and hospitality organizations includes Davidson (2003) and Luk (1997). Yasin and Zimmerer (1995) and Kozak and Rimmington (1998) studied benchmarking for achieving hospitality service quality. Maxwell, McDougall, and Blair (2000) discussed the service quality opportunity that was derived from managing diversity in hospitality organizations.

The research associated with the study of total quality management in hospitality areas includes the studies of Randall and Senior (1994), and O'Neill, Wastson, and McKenna (1994). Another subgroup involving developments in the service strategy are Bowen (1997), Denburg and Kleiner (1994), and Enz and Siguaw (2000). These research studies only a few among many.

The last group of service quality literature involves the measurement of service quality. Many researchers in this domain applied the SERVQUAL or modified instrument to identify the perception of service in quality in the hospitality industry (Douglas, Connor, 2003 and Saleh and Ryan, 1991). Another group concerns the constructs of service quality measurement combined with those using other techniques. This group includes Getty and Getty (2003).

Service quality is extremely important to today's businesses, particularly those in the hospitality industry. The industry simply cannot survive without delivering satisfied quality of their services. A survey of Canadians hospitality found that service quality was the most popular subject for education and training programs (Shaw and Patterson, 1995).

Knutson, et al. (1995) and Hakserver, Render, Russell, and Murdick (1999) rationalized the essentials of service quality including higher customer loyalty, higher market share, higher returns to investors, loyal employees, lower casts, and lesser vulnerability to price competition. Based on academic literatures, Wuest (2001) reported similar impacts of service quality in tourism, hospitality, and leisure businesses which were improving guest convenience; enhancing service provider's image, ensuring customer security, generating traffic linking to profits, saving costs, and higher market share, and establishing a competitive edge, and customer demand. They were specifically explained in the following statements:

"Services such as accessible rest rooms, refreshment vending, shuttle service, and comfortable seating add to guest convenience, enjoyment, and satisfaction and indirectly encourage guests to extend their stay ... Full service hotels provide almost every imaginable service to their guests ... Protective service such as adequate lighting, security staff, emergency medical facilities, guest room locks, sprinklers, and clearly marked exits instill [safety] confidence... Satisfied guests will be more likely to extend their stay, return to the destination, and recommend the property to potential guests... With creative ideas and a strong understanding of the needs and desires of their guest hospitality service providers and developing innovative, extensive service strategies... By providing specific services [such as cable television, newspaper delivery, coffee, room service, fitness facilities, and laundry/dry cleaning], businesses can generate demand among certain target markets... ".

Denburg and Hleiner (1994) emphasized the importance of a company's provision of excellence service quality. They reported, "Service excellence in the best way for a company to sustain a competitive advantage in today's competitive global market". They mentioned that technology made companies' products similar and that excellent quality of their service could help differentiate them in their market. To achieve such excellent service quality, a company needed to understand their customer's expectations. Then, they could design and develop its service improvement program. The program had to include the issues of customer segmentation, service culture, listening to customers, recruitment and training of service personnel, empowerment to their people, and appraisal system.

Small hotels also recognized the service quality. However, they tended to use basic and simple strategies to control to quality of their services. According to Lewis (1989), almost one third of small country-based UK hotels inspected their quality of services by establishing particular service standards. A few hotels (15%) used anonymous transactions to inspect their service quality. From those who monitored their service quality, half of them in formed their staff about the monitoring transaction and almost all were reported to discuss the results with the staff. The communication between the hotel owner/management and the staff demonstrates that the hotel operators understand the need for employee involvement in delivering service quality.

Additionally, if the hotel companies improved interpersonal communication, they could achieve better service standards, increase profits and repeat businesses through better service and high customer satisfaction, greater employee pride and sense of ownership, and lower staff turnover (Creelman, 1992).

Service quality in hospitality has been studied from different approaches. The total quality management (TQM) and the gap analysis model are two examples. The gap analysis approach is the foundation for a number of researches in the hospitality field have contributed to knowledge development from this approach (Saleh and Ryan, 1991; Knutson, Stevens and Patton, 1995; Mei, Dean and White, 1999; Getty and Getty, 2003; Ekinci, 1999). Another approach that is based on TQM found in Randall and Senior (1994).

Based on TQM, the study of Randall and Senior (1994) employed the perceptual blueprinting technique to examine quality standard achievement of hospitality services. The technique was used to identify the failing points in the service delivery system as perceived by both the customers and the employees. The study revealed that there was critical part of TQM. In addition, Nick (1993) summarized that a consensus on total commitment by management, employee ownership and empowerment, a strong sense of mission, communications, training and customer care were necessary for quality management in the hospitality industry.

Getty and Tompson (1994) tested the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and recommending behavior of customers in making lodging decisions. There were three conclusions to their study. First, the results showed that the dimensions of service quality have a stronger relationship with the overall perceptions of quality than the satisfaction does. Second, opposing Parasuraman, et al. (1988) they discovered that reliability failed to be the most important dimension of service quality. Their contradiction was justified because of the addition of more important dimension of service quality. Their contradiction was justified because of the addition of more generic items and inadequate exposure -of customers to the service provided by a specific property. Third, there was no significant direct effect on satisfaction based on the perceptions of overall quality as previously assuming reciprocal effect between these two variables.

For the attempts of the hospitality industry to attain service quality as sustainable competitive advantage, O'Neill and Charters (2000) affirmed that hospitality organizations were actively receptive to service quality initiatives, such as the British Standards Institute, the European Quality Award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, and the Edwards Deming prize. In addition, the hospitality organizations paid close attention to raising the service quality through investment in human resources development.

Furthermore, a suggestion was made for hospitality professionals to incorporate the measurement of service quality in their quality improvement program in order to understand customers' perceptions of actual service delivered and to stay ahead of the customers by anticipation their needs. Enz and Siguaw (2000) examined the vest practices in service quality among the US Hospitality industry. Only a small

number of hotel operations focused specifically on service excellence which they did extremely well for one or more service issues; creating a service culture; building an empowered service delivery system; facilitating a customer listening orientation; and developing responsive service guarantee.

Service Quality Measurement in Hospitality Industry

In the field of hospitality, the measurement of service quality was derived from the concept and studies of service quality experts. A number of studies applied the modified SERVQUAL instrument to measure service quality in the hospitality industry. Several specific instruments were developed based on the SERVQUAL. Lee and Hing (1995) supported the SERVQUAL application in measuring service quality because it was relatively simple and inexpensive; provided benefits to entrepreneurs for developing better tailored marketing and was comparable in tracking the service quality of different firms in the same business sector.

The study of Saleh and Ryan (1991) attempted to apply the SERVQUAL model within the hospitality industry. Initially, assuming the same five dimensions of the developers, the result of their study however showed a somewhat different construct from the original model of the SERVQUAL. The factor analysis of the study combined tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance dimensions of the original model into "conviviality", the first factor of Saleh and Ryan's study, which explained roughly 63% and the remaining four factors (tangibles, reassurance, avoid sarcasm, and empathy) accounted for another 16%. They justified that different constructs might occur when using a 5-point scale instead of a 7-point scale as in the original research, and the invalidity of questions concerning tangibles.

In the same year, "LODGSERV", a modified SERVQUAL instrument, was developed to measure hotel guests' expectations of service quality and experience by using a 26-item index. It resulted in the same five dimensions (Knutson, Stevens, and Patton, 1995). Later, Knutson, Stevens, and Patton (1995) developed another version of SERVQUAL in the restaurant setting called "DINESERV". It was a tool for measuring service quality in restaurants. In the more specific goal of assessing the service quality, Lee and Hing (1995) attempted to assess the application of the SERVQUAL in the fine-dining restaurant sector. In 1999, another extension of the SERVQUAL scale was introduced in the hospitality industry, called "HOLSERV"

(Mei, Dean and White, 1999). In the HOLSERV study, a 27-item scale with a separate overall service quality was administered. This led to the extraction of three dimensions in clouding employee (behavior and appearance), tangibles, and reliability.

Ekinci (1999) proposed the application of the Q-sort technique in the context of service quality evaluation in hotels to validate the dimensions of the established models of service quality. Using the same approach as the SERVQUAL, a more recent study presented the development of a reliable and valid quantitative quality measuring tool that allowed hotel operators to measure their customers' perception of service performance. It was named "Lodging Quality Index" (LQI). The LQI study found tangibility, reliability (includes original reliability and credibility dimension), responsiveness, confidence (includes original competence, courtesy, security, and access dimensions), and communication (includes original communications and understanding dimensions). Table 3 provides short descriptions of the service quality instruments in the hospitality area (Getty and Getty, 2003).

Table 3 Comparison of service quality instruments in hospitality industry

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh and Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
Data Collection	Customers of a telephone co., two insurance cos., and two banks in USA	Guests at a downtown 400-room four-star hotel in Canada	Adults who had stayed in a hotel/motel at least 3 night during the previous year	Guests of five hotels in Australia, ranking three to five star	Frequent-traveler business owners who were members of their local Chamber of Commerce in 12 US cities
Sample size	290-487 in 5 companies	200 guests and 17 management staff	201 persons	155 guests	222-229 respondents
Response rate	17-25%	85%	Not available	15.5%	18.5-19.1%
Items	22 items modified from the original SERVQUAL (1988)	33 items modified from Martin (1996), which measured service quality in restaurant context (originally based on the SERVQUAL)	26 items modified from the SERVQUAL by Parasuraman et al. (1986) The study focused on only the expectation side.	27 items modified from the SERVQUAL (1991)	26 items modified from the SERVQUAL (1988)

Table 3 (cont.)

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh & Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
Questionnaire Format	2 parts: Perception and Expectation, and a part of point-allocation importance	2 parts: Perception and Expectation	1 part: Expectation	1 column customized format for comparison between Perception and Expectation, and a separate part of overall service quality	1 part: Perceived performance
-Explained variance	57% to 71%	78.57%	Not available	64.74%	Not available
Application	Measuring service quality based on the comparison of customers' perception and expectation for service business in general		Measuring only customers' expectations in hotel industry	Multiple regression analysis showing Employee as the best predictor, followed by Tangibles and Reliability	A new instrument to measure service quality in lodging industry, not limited by the SERVQUAL dimensions
Response scale	7-point scale for both parts and a constant-sum comparative-ratings scale (100 points) for measuring the importance	5-point scale	7-point scale	7-point scale for the comparison and 10-point scale for the overall measurement	Not specified in the scale development process. No specific point scale is suggested for its application
Questionnaire administration	Mailing survey	On-site survey	Telephone survey	In-site survey	Mailing survey
Data analysis procedure for assessing factor structure	Principal-axis factor analysis followed by oblique rotation	Factor analysis	Confirmatory factor analysis	Factor analysis followed by varimax rotation	Principal component s extraction
Findings:					
-Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alphas)	0.80 to 0.93	0.74 to 0.77	0.92	0.97	High

Table 3 (cont.)

	SERVQUAL (1991)	Saleh & Ryan (1991)	LODGSERV (1991)	HOLSERV (1999)	LQI (2003)
-Final number of dimensions	5 dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy	5 dimensions: conviviality, Tangibles, Reassurance, Avoid Sarcasm, and Empathy	5 dimensions: Reliability, Assurance, Responsiveness, Tangibles, and Empathy	3 dimensions: Employee, Tangibles, and Reliability	5 dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Confidence, and Communication

Source: Adapted from Parasuraman, et al., 1994

Spas and tourism overview

Spa Categories

According to International Spa Association, there are seven categories of spas: (Ninnar, 2005)

1. Hotel or Resort Spa refers to any spas situated in hotels or resorts serving both hotel guests and walk-in guests.

2. Destination Spa is a spa established in its own building which includes recreational areas. Most of its clients will stay overnight, participating in selectable activities like meditation programs or yoga.

3. Medical Spa means a spa providing medical treatments and utilizing medical instruments under specialized personnel's instructions. Generally, this kind of spa is located in hospitals or clinics.

4. Day Spa and City Spa refer to spa services that can be finished at any time during the day. It may take only 30 minutes or one hour. The locations are usually in cities or business centers.

5. Mineral Spring Spa is a spa service at a natural spring which has been developed to be a tourist attraction.

6. Club Spa means a spa combined with a fitness centre.

7. Cruise Ship Spa is a spa service on a cruise ship. This is operated together with useful diet for passengers during the voyage.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (2005) stated that the hotel/ resort spa sector continues to lead the way in the growth of the local spa industry. An increasing number of hotel properties in Thailand are launching their own spa operators in the coming years. Many more deluxe hotels are investing in the addition of spa facilities and will be offering in house lines of spa product and services.

Ninnar (2005) also recommend that spa treatments also emphasize on pampering the five senses of human beings, viz. sight, taste, smell, hearing and touch. All these are held significant to provide visitors with greatest satisfaction.

Steps to creating a quality spa experience

Top five quality to spas services by Heather Gunter (2005)

1. It begins with the first touch, either by phone or in person. Employees should be trained to get the right information and help guests book the experiences they want.

2. Provide a plush, clean comfortable robe and slippers to help guests relax.

3. Touch all five senses: Sight (details: orchids, design of spa: bamboo floors); Sound (music, waterfall/fountain in relaxation area); Touch (treatments: pure aromatherapy oils); Smell (candles, incense); Taste (tea, fresh fruit)

4. Treat the guests as a whole: body, mind and spirit the holistic approach asks: What is causing the ailments? What can we teach our guests?

5. Provide time and opportunity for relaxation after the treatment and encourage guests to stay awhile.

Background of Men Spas in Thailand

At the beginning, spas in Thailand were chiefly located in luxurious hotels. They were established around the year 1994 to meet the needs of foreign visitors at that time. The services gained popularity very soon. That's why new spas have sprung up like mushroom in cities and famous attractions. Many of them have developed with advanced techniques such as hydrotherapy and aromatherapy.

Relevant recent research

Suthep Prathuangpokjaroen (1992) studied roles and impact of first class hotels in Bangkok Metropolis to study the development and expansion of first class hotels and its impact to urban land users. According to the study it was found that

service and facility of the hotels has been developed to serve the social and economic activity of Bangkok and serve tourism industry amount of the hotels have been investment caused the employment and main revenue of tourism industry. The first class hotels in located and distributed in C.B.D., especially in Bang Rak, Pratumwan and Klong Toey district. Because of the advantage of accessibility tourist facility and natural visual value, the hotels in this area had impact on traffic, infrastructure, environment and urban land use.

Jarunee Tancharoen (1999) The purposes of this study were to 1) study types of organizational culture on five-star hotel and four-star hotel industry in Bangkok, 2) compare organizational culture between five-star hotel and four-star hotel, 3) study the impact of the type of organizational culture to service quality. Two-groups of questionnaire were distributed to 363 hotel officers and 336 customers. Statistical techniques used in this study were percentage, means, and Factor Analysis, t-test and spearman correlation. The results of this study found that most of customers were male, 30-40 years old. In five-star hotels, most of them came from Europe but in four star hotels, most came from Asia. The organizational culture of five-star hotels could not be identified exactly, but tended to be constructive type. The organizational culture of four-star hotels was combined between constructive and aggressive. Types of organizational culture were not related to service quality of the hotels. Moreover, the service quality related to customers satisfaction. This study provides discussion and recommendation for further study.

Supawadee Kanchanawat (1998) is studied about the attitude and the influential factors towards the large hotel's catering departments in Bangkok. The results reveal that the target group is mostly from the private sector or corporate client and individual customers. The preference in catering style is buffet. The purpose of event is mostly seminar. Most customers do not have loyalty to certain hotel, they move around. The most influential factors for marketing plan are product or service and promotional activities in sale promotion. Promotion tactic play a major role in supporting customers to make a decision.

Mayuree Lertanaprechasakul (2002) researched about the Customer Satisfaction toward the Nangkhai Grand Thani Hotel. This research is conducted under the following three objectives: 1) to compare expectation and performance of customers to

measure their satisfaction toward the services provided by Nongkhai Grand Thani hotel. 2) to assess the relationship between service provided by the Nongkhai Grand Thani Hotel to its customers with their overall satisfaction, word of mouth and repeat purchase intentions. 3) to suggest methods to enhance customer satisfaction toward the services provided by Nongkhai Grand Thani Hotel. Therefore, it can be concluded the knowledge of staffs, mode of payment, information about goods and services in hotel significantly affect the overall customer satisfaction. Pre-service waiting, the courtesy of staffs and the security system significant affect the repeat purchase intention. Knowledge of staffs and the courtesy of staffs significantly affect the world of month.

Shalini Phol (2002) studied about conducted to study the customer evaluations of service complaint experiences and its implications for relationship market at first class hotels in the Bangkok Metropolitan area. Many companies consider investment in complaint handling as a means of increasing customer commitment and building customer loyalty. They are not aware on how to deal successfully with service failures or the impact of complaint handing strategies. Using justice theory, the researcher demonstrates that customers of first class hotels in the Bangkok Metropolitan area evaluate complaint incidents in terms of the outcomes the receive (distributive justice), the procedures used to arrive at the outcome (procedural justice), and the nature of interpersonal treatment during the process (interpersonal justice). In turn, the researcher develops and tests hypothesis regarding the interplay between the perceived justice evaluations and satisfaction with complaint handing. Finally satisfaction with complaint handing is tested against relationship variables: trust and commitment. The objectives of this research encompass, first, to measure customer evaluations of a first class hotel efforts to resolve their service problems. The second objective is to measure how complaint-handing evaluations at first class hotels affect customer satisfaction and how satisfaction then influences customer trust and commitment. Lastly, to examine complaint-handing evaluations and help managers develop effective complaint handing strategies.