

THE IMPORTANCE OF
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:
A GAP ANALYSIS AT
KURALKAN COMPANY

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To My Family, Hülya & Süleyman HARMANDAROĞLU...

APPROVAL PAGE

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1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.

2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:

- i) Research Methods course during the undergraduate study.
- ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Turkey and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

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Jun, 2010

ABSTRACT

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In the 21st century, enterprises have begun to concentrate increasingly on the issue of customer satisfaction in order to sustain their existence as well as being ready for possible problems, as only customer-satisfaction oriented enterprises have managed to increase their profits and come into prominence among their competitors.

In this respect, the primary purpose of this study was to measure the satisfactions of Kuralkan Company customers and to compare their perceptions with those of Kuralkan contact personnel and managers. This study consists of four main parts. In parts one and two, a literature review has been made in depth. In part three, brief information has been given about the research method, while the last part comprises a discussion of the findings with appropriate recommendations and conclusions.

"Gap Analysis Method" has been used in order to measure the differences among the perceptions of customers, contact personnel, and managers in perceiving customer satisfaction. In this study, three different questionnaires utilizing "Likert Scale" were used respectively for customers, contact personnel, and managers. Survey questions have been classified into five main groups; customer behaviors, customer services, physical conditions, product, and general for further comparisons. The study used 'SPSS for Windows 13.0 statistical software' to analyze the data collected.

All in all, customer satisfaction has been emphasized in depth in this study; and, in the analysis process of customer satisfaction, the necessity of minimizing the gap between the perceptions of customers, contact personnel, and managers has been emphasized.

Key Words:

Service Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Questionnaire, Service, Customer Service, Gap Analysis

KISA ÖZET

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Ocak 2010

21.yüzyılda işletmeler varlıklarını sürdürebilmek, olası problemlere önceden hazırlıklı olmak için müşteri memnuniyeti üzerinde her geçen gün daha çok çalışmaya başlamışlardır. Zira ancak memnuniyet esaslı işletmeler kârlılık oranını arttırabilmiş ve rakipleri arasında öne çıkabilmiştir.

Bu açıdan bu çalışmanın amacı, Kuralkan Firması müşterilerinin memnuniyetini; müşteri, müşteri temsilcisi ve yönetici yönünden kıyaslayarak ölçmeye çalışmaktır. Bu çalışma dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci ve ikinci bölümde konu ile ilgili literatür taraması yapılmış; üçüncü bölümde araştırma yönetimi hakkında kısaca bilgi verilmiş ve son bölümde ise bulgular sunularak, sonuçlar ve öneriler verilmiştir.

Müşteri memnuniyetini algılamada, yöneticilerin ve müşteri temsilcilerinin düşüncelerinin ne kadar uyumlu olduklarını ölçebilmek için "Aralık Analizi Metot"undan faydalanılmıştır. Çalışmada müşterilere, müşteri temsilcilerine ve yöneticilere yönelik Likert skalası kullanılan üç anket hazırlanmış ve onlara uygulanmıştır. Anket cevaplarının değerlendirilmesinde kıyaslama yapabilmek için, anketteki sorular personel davranışları, müşteri hizmetleri, fiziki koşullar, ürün ve genel olmak üzere beş gruba ayrılmıştır. Anket sonuçlarının değerlendirilmesinde 'SPSS 13.0 for Windows' programı kullanılmıştır.

Son olarak, bu çalışmada müşteri memnuniyetinin öneminin altı çizilmiş ve müşteri memnuniyetinin analizinde müşteri, müşteri temsilcisi ve yönetici açısından algılama aralıklarının en aza indirgenmesi gerekliliği üzerinde durulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Hizmet Kalitesi, Müşteri Memnuniyeti, Anket, Hizmet, Müşteri Hizmeti, Veri Analizi

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INTRODUCTION

Customers always desire to maximize their satisfaction from goods and services with their limited money. That is why customer satisfaction is the central element of the marketing concept. If satisfaction goes up, customers' brand loyalty increases. Satisfied customers share their experiences with their friends as a word-of-mouth communication. Therefore, it attracts other potential customers.

Moreover, service organizations can gain a competitive advantage improving their service quality. Since service is not tangible, customers' reactions to services can differ from time to time, day to day. The service quality impacts customer satisfaction directly.

In order to be able to understand the importance of customer satisfaction better, the background of customer satisfaction, that is, service quality should be examined initially. This research is conducted to provide a conceptual and empirical framework for perceived service quality.

Customers determine their degree of satisfaction by measuring the gap between their expectations and the degree to which those expectations are met. If the perceptions are equal to or greater than the expectations, customers are satisfied. Otherwise, customers will be dissatisfied.

Aim of this study is to clarify the perception differences between the customers, contact personnel, and managers of Kuralkan Company. In order

to identify these perception differences, three different questionnaires will be utilized on samples of customers, contact personnel, and managers. After collecting the data, SPSS 13.0 for Windows package software will be utilized for analysis.

In this study, the importance of the customer satisfaction is discussed in depth. In the first chapter, there are some definitions and explanations about service and service quality. Five service quality models, Servqual, and Servperf are explained.

The second chapter of this study includes the concept of customer satisfactions, related theories, predictors, measurement, consequences, determinants of customer satisfaction and related constructs.

Research methodology is presented in chapter three. In this chapter, information about Kuralkan Company, gap analysis, application method, sample selection and data collection procedure, the research instrument and reliability analysis are presented.

In the last chapter, chapter four, findings about the perception differences between the customers, contact personnel, and managers are explained in detail.

CHAPTER ONE

SERVICE & SERVICE QUALITY

Researchers have given different definitions for service. The word, service, has its origins in Servitum which in Latin means 'served by slaves'.

According to Kotler, Service is an intangible benefit one provides to another and its ownership cannot be claimed (Kotler, 1996). In addition, service may comprise the activities that one organization provides for another organization. Moreover, service quality is defined by American Association for Quality as the integrated characters of products and services that meet customers' demands.

Because of the fact that not only services, but also service quality are intangible, defining services becomes more difficult since there are all kinds of dissimilar services in society. Consequently, a multitude of definitions have been offered by researchers.

Service as a concept is hard to discuss, due to the fact that it is abstract and complicated (Li, 2001). Service quality is the integrated evaluation of customers obtained from services they receive. Customers are independent individuals who have got dissimilar needs and wants. Service quality is the ongoing evaluation customers give to products and services. From a customer's point of view, service quality is separated into two parts; process quality and output quality. In the process of receiving services, customers

evaluate services subjectively. Output quality is the customers' appraisal based on the results of services (Oliver 1981; 1993).

In addition, service quality can be divided into three parts; actual service, perceptual service and result service. Perceptual service is the way service providers deliver service. Actual service is the service customers get from the business. Result service is assessing if or not the results of services meet customers' expectation (Szmigin, 1993).

What is more, service quality is the subjective experience customers produce by comparing their pre-service expectation and actual experience. This assertion is similar with Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985) so that service quality is asserted as the difference of customers' pre-service expectation and post service perception. If service quality is same with the customers' pre-service expectation, the service has pre-perceived quality.

Customers' perception of service is heavily linked with the service quality (Kotler, 1996; 1999). Service Quality is the degree of overall appraisal of the service they receive (Su 2001).

Service Quality tries to answer and exceed customers' expectations from services. It is important for a business to attract customers and maintain long-term customer relations. Service quality can also improve efficiency and avoid unnecessary waste (Wang, 2002). The broad range of studies of service quality has evolved important parameters that need to be identified in order to satisfy the needs of customers (Choi 2001; Parasuraman et al. 1988).

To gain more insight into the conceptualization of service quality, it is necessary to discuss the results of higher service quality for firms. Firms with higher service quality may have better consumer reputations, word of mouth advertising, consumer awareness, and lower costs for attracting new customers. (Oliver, 1997) In other words, delivering high quality service assists firms in achieving success in their businesses. When a firm's service delivery performance does not fit customers' expectations, managers must first understand the causes of shortfalls in its firm's service delivery performance before it can take appropriate action to improve quality.

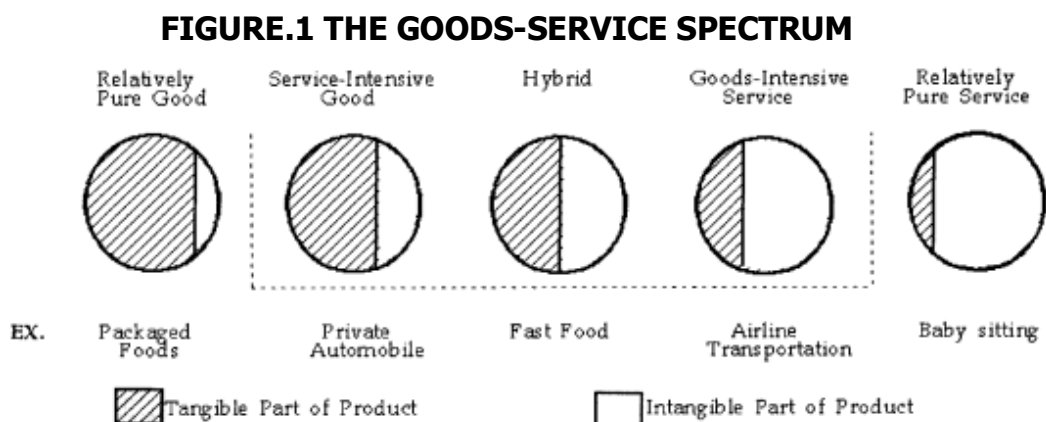
Meanwhile, no consensus has been achieved on the nature of the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention (will be discussed in the following pages) due to unique characteristics of a service product (Patterson & Spreng, 1997). In other words, research findings regarding these constructs have altered depending on the service context and where a service is provided.

Moreover, before explaining the concept of service and service quality and its relationships with other constructs deeply, it is necessary to be concerned with the three basic characteristics of a service product. Services are different from tangible products in terms of how they are produced, consumed, and evaluated. Firstly, while consumers can judge the quality of tangible goods, they are not able to judge the quality of intangible service products. Secondly, services are heterogeneous: their performance often

varies from producer to producer, from customer to customer, and from day to day. Finally, production and consumption of most services are not separable. While quality of service usually occurs in an interaction between the customer and the provider, it often occurs during service delivery. Instead of being engineered at the manufacturing plant, it is presented to the customer directly (Zeithaml et al. 1990).

In conclusion, services are dominated by experience qualities, attributes that can be meaningfully evaluated only after purchase and during production-consumption. Customers do not measure service quality purely on the outcome of a service. They also consider the process of the service delivered whenever the event is accomplished (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

Most products have both tangible and intangible elements that contribute to the core benefit (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). If the source of a product's core gain is more intangible than tangible, it should be regarded a service (see Figure 1).



Source: Berry L.L., & Parasuraman, A, (1991), *Marketing services: Competing through quality*, New York: The Free Press, p.18

In addition, Chelladurai (1999) has identified the four basic characteristics of a service as intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and simultaneity. Intangibility refers to the fact that a customer cannot judge the quality of the product before getting it. This means services are performances experienced by the customer, but not objects. Another feature of a service is perishability which implies that a service cannot be produced and stored for future use. Heterogeneity means that from producer to producer, customer to customer, and from day to day (time to time), the performance of the producer and customer's perception often differ. Because of this, the adjustment of performance and perception is not easy. Finally, simultaneity means the production of the product occurs simultaneously with the consumption of the product. That is, a service product cannot be judged prior to delivery to consumers.

With regard to the particular aspects of service quality, Finn and Lamb (1991) claimed that "defining and measuring quality is even more complicated when the quality is associated with the intangible aspects of service as compared to the tangible features of physical products".

To fulfill the basic objectives of a service-based organization, Rust and Oliver (1994) pointed out that managing service quality consists of three distinct processes; one is designing the service product; the second is designing the service environment; and the third is delivering the service. If

an organization based service wants to be successful in the market, it must satisfy the needs and wants of its customers.

It is necessary to give definitions of service quality described in specific contexts. Since there have been an increasing number of academic publications from various settings, the definition of service quality may differ on theoretical assumptions. Service quality has been determined by a number of different academic scholars on the basis of their own theoretical assumptions.

First of all, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) who developed the SERVQUAL instrument, defined the perceived service quality as a global judgment, or attitude relating to the superiority of a service. According to Parasuraman the service quality is the result of the comparison between the consumers' perceptions and expectations. That is, customers have expectations from a service. After or during this interaction between customer and the service, the former develops a perception of the service. That is why service quality is the relationship between the customers' perceptions and expectations and should be conceptualized as an attitude. (Cronin & Taylor, 1992)

The understanding of what service means to the customer is important in order to manage service quality effectively (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Service quality is the difference between customers' expectations for service performance and their perceptions of the service received (Asubonteng et al.

1996). Bitner and Hubbert also described service quality as the consumer's overall feeling of the relative superiority of the organization and its services. (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994)

As discussed earlier, there has been no consensus in determining service quality among investigators engaged in the discipline of service quality. However, the definitions discussed here may provide the basis for understanding the concept of service quality.

In addition, identification of dimensions of service quality is most meaningful in measuring the overall satisfaction of customers. According to Jennifer (1998), service quality dimensions are attributes which contribute to the consumer expectations and perceptions of service quality. In every service based organizations, the service to their customers is going to be different. The dimensions of service quality may differ according to the type of service-based organizations (Chang, 1998). For instance, there may be an important difference in the potential dimensions of service quality between an internet service provider and a motorcycle service provider.

There are three dimensions of service quality asserted by Lehtinen and Lehtinen; (1991) these are physical, interactive, and corporate quality.

Firstly, physical quality refers to the physical factors of services; secondly, interactive quality refers the interaction between the customer and the service product; and thirdly, corporate quality refers to the way customers and potential customers see the corporate entity. While physical and

interactive quality cannot be experienced by a customer before reaching this service, corporate quality is the only dimension of service quality that can be experienced by a customer prior to engaging in the service production operation (Chang, 1998).

It seems easy to describe dimensions for a service. Nevertheless, reaching a generic definition of service quality is not easy (Jennifer, 1998). In this perspective, Parasuraman et al. (1988) suggested five dimensions of service quality which one considered to be the most widely accepted dimensions of service quality. These dimensions and some explanations about these are presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE.2 FIVE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Dimensions	Explanations
Tangibles	Physical Facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence
Empathy	Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers

Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L., (1988), "SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality", *Journal of Retailing*, 64 (1), p.23

Berry and Parasuraman (1991) emphasized that dimensions of service quality may be classified into five groups which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. They also underlined that among

the five dimensions of service quality, reliability is the most important dimension which customers consider in evaluating a company's quality of service. To prove this assertion, they asked approximately 2000 customers of five different service-based organizations to rate the relative importance of the five dimensions of service quality by assigning 100 points among the dimensions. In the process of evaluation, customers who participated in the study ranked "reliability" as the most critical dimension of service quality followed, respectively, by responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility.

1.1. Service Quality Models

To understand better how service quality impacts organizations, several researchers such as Berry, Keegan, Mastenbroek, Ezerman, Kerklaan, Parasuraman have suggested a number of models.

1.1.1. Keegan's Model

This construct has been stated by Keegan as "market required quality" in 1990. The main point in this model is that customers have important position in the service provider's processes. In this model, customers which are in the core of the business, are not only the generators of quality necessities, but also the judge as to whether those requirements have been met or not. This model includes two keys which are visiting customers and taking their feedback.

One of these keys states that the way of achieving customer involvement is the communication between the customer and the business (Vandermerwe 1993; Heskett et al. 1994). The other key states that the need for feedback from consumers appears to be the important issue about quality (Berry, 1995). The customer's needs provide an answer to the total quality issue of service in organizations.

1.1.2. Kerklaan's Model

Kerklaan (1991) determined some preventive measures in order to modeling the service quality. These measures consist of three parts. These are:

1. Increasing the relationship with the customers rather than seeing the services sold as single transactions,
2. Improving the product's quality continuously in order to meet the desires of the customer; and
3. Determining the customer's wants and needs to satisfy their expectations fully, i.e., preparing the service area according to customers, designing production processes around the customer's demands, etc...

According to Kerklaan, a proactive approach is more preferable than a reactive approach. Reactive approach has some disadvantages to the organizations. One of the weaknesses is that reactive approach has the constant repairing for unsuccessful customer needs and wants (Kerklaan,

1991). In the proactive approach, long term objectives are allowed to integrate daily practices (Robbins, 1990). Moreover, proactive approach regards to investment in customers as an objective of the organization and its employees (Reichheld, 1996). Consequently, organizations demanding positive implications for their quality of service need to integrate these proactive approaches into their daily operations.

1.1.3. Mastenbroek's Model

A model was suggested as a preventive maintenance procedure for organizations. In this model, there are two tools which are:

1. Critically evaluating the organization's overall purpose and willingness to fluctuate with environmental demands; and
2. Defining their customer audience (Mastenbroek et al. 1991).

Mastenbroek claimed that several questions about service should be integrated into the organization's mission statement. There are primarily five questions organizations need to ask themselves; these are:

1. Who are our customers?
2. What services and products do we supply?
3. What service items are most important to customers?
4. What is the competition up to?
5. What are we going to improve and what actions will be taken to make these improvements?

First of all, an organization should ask itself who its customers are. It needs to determine and segment them according to some criterion. Secondly, the organization should set the services and products it supplies. Thirdly, it has to identify the most important of service item according to customers. Fourth and last are what the competition is up to and what actions will be taken. Although concentrating on these questions routinely is difficult for organizations, it is possible to reduce the distance between themselves and their customers (Heskett et al. 1994).

In conclusion, integrating such questions into the organization's mission statement helps the customer focus (Gale, 1994). The organization can easily get closer to the customers and develop quality relationships with them (Grant & Schlesinger, 1995). Doubtless, to determine the customer needs and adjust the organization according to these customer needs are important for an organization. By quantifying customer needs, organizations align their internal processes to meet customer needs and increase their competitive advantage in their industry (Reichheld & Sasser 1990).

1.1.4. Berry's Model

The aim of this model is getting even closer to the customer (Jacob, 1994). The service provider should make service a driving force as part of its culture. Service quality can become a direction, a calling force for the organization (Berry, 1995). Berry defined service as tangible, specific, and clear.

In addition, Gale (1994) claimed that an organization's objectives must be visible to customers to meet the quality demands of the customer. The organization has such a real mission that customers consciously perceive it in their service encounters.

1.1.5. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's Model

The pioneer of this model claimed that the judgment of customers' expectations and perceptions is important in completing a customer orientation within an organization. This appraisal is defined as SERVQUAL which is an instrument that assesses the value of quality in service interactions. SERVQUAL tries to measure the discrepancy between customers' expectations from an organization and its product or service and customers' perceptions (Parasuraman et al. 1986).

In addition to expectations and perceptions, SERVQUAL measures service quality on five dimensions. According to Parasuraman, et al. (1986) these five dimensions give the instrument the commonly referred name, the "RATER" model. The RATER Model (Parasuraman et al. 1986) concentrates on the service quality issues in terms of these five specific categories. Also; it measures expectations and perceptions separately using a seven-point, Likert-type scale. (1 to 7 scale)

Parasuraman et al. (1988) claimed that for reaching success, it is necessary to deliver service quality. There is a high interest in the measurement of service quality since delivering high levels of service quality

is a key to service providers' efforts to position themselves more effectively in the competitive market (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). In addition, an organization is able to evaluate its customers' perceptions of service quality if service quality becomes an element of marketing strategy (Asubonteng, McCleary & Swan, 1996).

There are lots of elements of measuring service quality such as SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. Indeed, availability of a quality assessment tool for evaluating service quality may contribute to the improvement of service quality. Therefore, it is essential to be concerned with the important situations and development procedure of service quality instruments.

1.2. Servqual

SERVQUAL is a service quality instrument which has been used to evaluate the differences between the expectations and perceptions of customers. SERVQUAL tools are primarily linked with the perceived quality of a service product and regards perceived quality as a sort of attitude. It is not linked with satisfaction directly (Parasuraman et al. 1985).

As discussed earlier, SERVQUAL involves the calculation of the divergences between expectations and perceptions on five service quality dimensions. While measuring SERVQUAL instrument, one to seven Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' is used to classify the expectation-based scale and the perception-based scale, a total of twenty two item pairs. These items are presented to respondents in order to compare the

differences between their expectations and perceptions. Indeed, respondents are first asked to provide the degree of service expectation for a service based organization on the expectation-based scale and then respondents are asked to respond to the perception-based scale based on service experiences provided by the service-based organization. SERVQUAL score is acquired by subtracting the expectation rating from the perception rating (Parasuraman et al. 1988). The following formula presents how perceived service quality (SERVQUAL) is calculated:

$$\text{SERVQUAL Score} = \text{Perception Score} - \text{Expectation Score}$$

Hence, evaluating the quality of service using SERVQUAL involves calculating the difference between the ratings customers specify to the paired expectation/perception statements. As seen in the formula above, Parasuraman et al. (1985) emphasized that consumer perceptions of quality is reached from the gap between performance and expectations. They suggested that whenever performance exceeds expectations, quality increases and vice versa.

In addition, The SERVQUAL scale has been adopted by a number of service-based organizations to evaluate the level of customers' perceptions on service quality offered. The scale is categorized into five groups including:

1. Domain of the service quality conception,
2. Data collection and scale refinement,
3. SERVQUAL's dependability,

4. Judgment of SERVQUAL's validity, and
5. Applications of SERVQUAL.

What is more, the researchers suggested a scale presenting 97 items of service quality dimensions at the beginning. The initial ten-dimensions were:

1. Tangibles,
2. Reliability,
3. Responsiveness,
4. Communication,
5. Credibility,
6. Security,
7. Competence,
8. Courtesy,
9. Understanding or knowing the customer, and
10. Access.

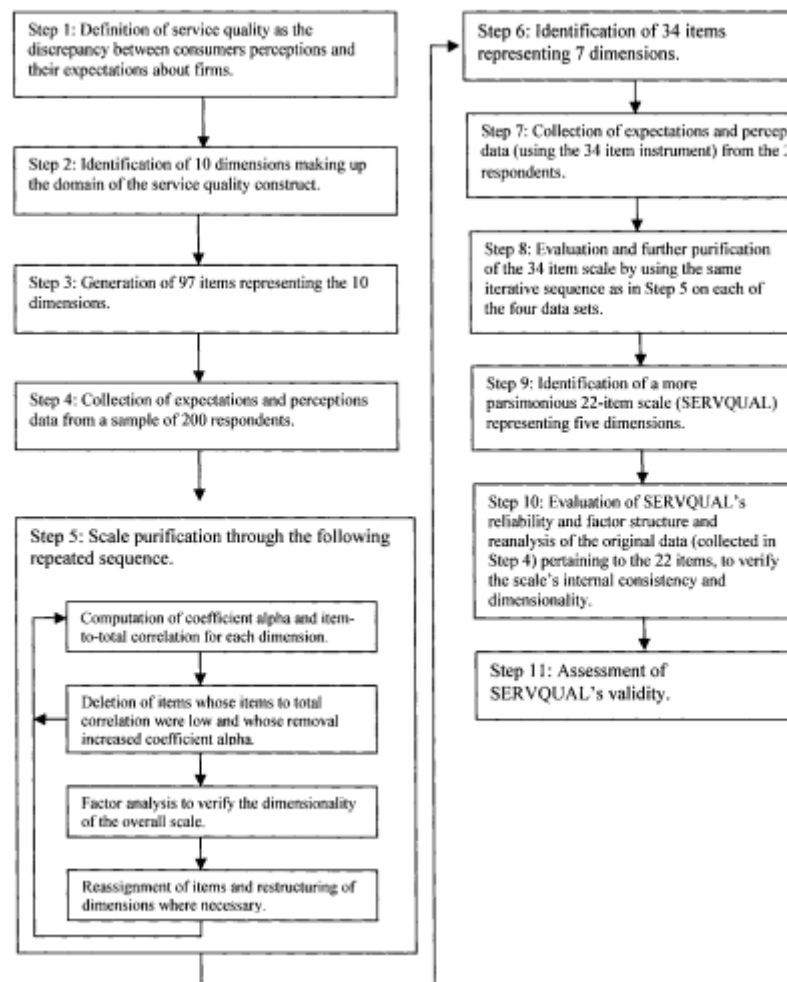
Items which were not related to service quality directly were extracted after generation of the pool of items (Asubonteng, McCleary & Swan, 1996). Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced a new version of the SERVQUAL scale which consisted of a total of 22 item pairs in accordance with the five dimensions of service quality through testing reliability and validity of the SERVQUAL scale. These are:

1. Tangibles,
2. Reliability,

3. Responsiveness,
4. Assurance, and
5. Empathy.

Figure 3 includes the summary of steps employed in developing the SERVQUAL.

FIGURE.3 SUMMARY OF STEPS EMPLOYED IN DEVELOPING THE SERVICE-QUALITY SCALE (SERVQUAL)



Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L., (1988), "SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality", *Journal of Retailing*, 64 (1), p.14

1.3. SERVPERF

SERVPERF is the performance based scale instrument which measures only customer's perceived service quality. Cronin and Taylor (1992) observed that using only the performance based scale was more useful and comparing with the perceived service quality of customers. After they examined the SERVQUAL scale, they claimed that SERVPERF is more efficient than SERVQUAL. To them, conceptualization of service quality using SERVQUAL was not adequate.

Moreover, they noticed that there are lots of disadvantages of the SERVQUAL scale about the disconfirmation. When perceived service quality was measured as an attitude, the measuring perceived service quality was more effective.

In addition, researchers noticed that the performance-based scale, SERVPERF, was more efficient than SERVQUAL scale in terms of the number of items to be measured. Because SERVQUAL included 44 items on the expectation and perception scales while SERVPERF had only 22 items on the performance-based scale. The dimensions of service quality for the SERVPERF scale, on the other hand, were same with the dimension offered by Parasuraman. That is, the dimensions of service quality for the SERVPERF scale were:

1. Tangibles,
2. Reliability,

3. Responsiveness,
4. Assurance, and
5. Empathy.

In conclusion, SERVQUAL consisted of measurement items twice as many as SERVPERF. Besides, the dimension of service quality for both the SERVQUAL and the SERVPERF scales were the same. In addition to this, Cronin and Taylor (1992) who studied dimensionality, reliability, and validity of those service quality measures including SERVQUAL and SERVPERF noticed that scores obtained from the performance-only SERVPERF measurement indicated greater validity evidence because of its content and high level of discriminant validity. Also, the result showed that a convergent validity score between the items on the SERVPERF scale was higher than SERVQUAL.

CHAPTER TWO

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

In today's competitive world, customers have become the most valuable resource that businesses compete for. Customers' satisfaction is influenced directly from the expectations on products and services. The higher levels of customer satisfaction may result in higher level of repurchase. If the determinants of customer satisfaction are discussed in depth, it will possible to satisfy the customers.

This chapter includes some explanations about the customer services in the view of three perspectives before discussing the concept of customer satisfaction. Also, related theories about customer satisfaction are mentioned.

Besides, the predictors, the measurement, and consequences of customer satisfaction are explained. Finally, the determinants and related constructs of customer satisfaction are cleared in this chapter.

First of all, customer service can be classified into three perspectives. Measurement perspective which deals with quantifying service quality contains the assessment of customer expectations and provider performance against these expectations.

Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) studied specific dimensions of service quality which can be measured and compared to customer

expectations. This approach utilizes the same principles of expectancy disconfirmation, as discussed earlier, but offers a specific tool, called SERVQUAL. This tool can be used in practical applications for assessing what customers feel is important in the service relationship. The literature of gap in this study is used to understand the difference between expectation and performance.

Second perspective is the operational perspective which deals with structure, policies and procedures within the service business such as organizational forms, productivity, service information systems, marketing, etc.

Structure and operation of service and product organizations are different from one another. Organic organizations having high contact technical service tend to be more decentralized. The effectiveness of the organization was a function of the communication among operational constituents (Mintzberg, 1979). Moreover, Solomon (1982) suggested that service workers are more effective if they are able to adjust their own behavior based on their perceptions of customer needs.

To sum up, most companies understand the crucial role the service worker plays in the overall success or failure of the service relationship. In the service literature, worker is in a very important position with respect to customer service. Schlesinger and Heskett (1991) support that service worker empowerment and general awareness of customer satisfaction is a

key strategic element in customer service. Besides, Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman also noticed that lack of perceived control is an antecedent of why organizations fail to meet service specification standards. (Zeithaml et al. 1990)

Final perspective is the behavioral perspective which deals with relationships, leadership, service constituent behavior, and empowerment.

Several surveys have shown the significance of the human interaction component of service delivery when determining satisfaction (Brown et al. 1989). Bitner studied the role of employee behaviors as they relate to customers' perception of satisfaction. He also found that certain generalized behaviors in which contact employees respond to the customer could influence the satisfaction (Bitner et al. 1990). The role of contact personnel is important in customer service in terms of the satisfaction of customer.

Bitner suggested that comparing perceptions of managers, contact workers, and customers would be useful in understanding the interactive complexities of service encounters.

In addition to Bitner's suggestion, Lovelock examined a "tripartite (having three parts)" relationship of service constituents in a high contact relationship. This relationship has an effect on how the organization and the primary contact are positioned from the customer's perspective (Maister & Lovelock, 1982).

Where the contact person provides substantial added value to the customer, the relationship between the customer and the service worker is going to be more important than any other relationship between the three parties.

What is more, Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry suggested a survey of the service contact worker and the manager in addition to the customer to determine the differences in perceptions vis-a-vis the customer's. Their use of the service worker's and manager's perceptions is helpful in understanding that differences actually do exist and in prescribing solutions to close the gaps.

Bitran and Hoeh (1990) tried to explain the power bases in the relationship between contact person and customer. Contact person, who is a coach, provides knowledge on performance and feedback on process.

Solomon et al. (1985) viewed service encounters as a subset of human interactions. They stated that the result of each service event is a function of customer perceptions, provider characteristics, and production realities. They also proposed that service encounters can be measured from three different perspectives, namely the customer's, the service worker's, and the organization managers'. These three legs are important factor in determining the customer service and customer satisfaction.

2.1. The Concept of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction and service quality are directly correlated. If service quality is improved, customer satisfaction is improved as well. Also, service quality, price, environment and personal differences influence customer satisfaction (Bitner 1990; Bolton & Drew 1991; Zeithaml & Bitner 1996). The following are well-known definitions of satisfaction:

- The overall experience customers have when purchasing and consuming products and services is called customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction which is a cumulative perception will shape product quality; service quality and customer re-purchase decisions (Anderson et al. 1994).
- The welfare that customers get from purchasing products or services is satisfaction. Customer satisfaction which is subjective feeling differs due to personal divergences. Different degrees of satisfaction cause different needs of customers (Ostrom & Iacobucci, 1995).
- Customer satisfaction is the reflection customers make to their prior purchase. If the performance exceeds their expectation, customers' satisfactions go up. The highest valued element in a job is customer satisfaction (Hou & Yao 1995; McAlexander et al. 2003).
- Satisfaction is a judgment on a product or service feature, or on the product or service as a whole. It is also claimed that satisfaction is

a desirable end state of consumption; it is a pleasurable experience (Oliver, 1997).

- The result of the quality of products and services perceived by customers is customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is the customers' evaluation of services after purchasing (Oliver 1997; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).
- Satisfaction is the relationship between perception of customers and their expectations (Baker & Crompton, 2000).
- To gain more insight into the concept of customer satisfaction, Fornell and Wernerfelt (1987) claimed that firms should encourage customers who are dissatisfied with their products or services to complain and then manage to potential complaints in order to retain the customers.
- Moreover, Hartshorn (1990) emphasized that individuals involved in the service industry must have a clear understanding of the nature of customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer value. In addition, satisfaction has direct effects on profit through its influence on customer retention. In contrast, dissatisfaction has the effect of increasing the search for alternatives, resulting in a larger brand image problem (Anderson et al., 1994).
- Satisfaction is the emotional reaction to a product or service experience by customers. To the customer satisfaction model proposed by Spreng, overall satisfaction was influenced by a

consumer's satisfaction with the product itself and with the information used in choosing a product (Spreng et al. 1996).

- In an attempt to more fully elaborate on the concept of satisfaction, Mullin et al. (2000) asserted that the level of satisfaction is calculated by subtracting the cost from benefit. They discussed that the construct of customer satisfaction is primarily associated with get and give components.
- Finally, Choi (2001) pointed out that an approach to the concept of customer satisfaction is to understand it as a perceived value.

2.2. Related Theories on Customer Satisfaction

There are numerous theories of customer satisfaction in literature. Disconfirmation and Equity are two well known constructs of satisfaction theories that have been linked to consumer behavior (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988).

2.2.1. Disconfirmation of Expectations

Disconfirmation is simply a comparison between a service's performance and an individual's expectations.

As discussed earlier, the disconfirmation of expectations is that consumers reach satisfaction level by comparing product or service performance with prior expectations about how the product or service should perform (Bitner, 1990).

Bitner suggested four types of theories including consistency, contrast, assimilation-contrast, and negativity theories in order to explain the impact of disconfirmation on satisfaction (Bitner, 1987).

2.2.1.1. Consistency Theory

According to consistency theory, when disconfirmation occurs, customers will try to adjust their perceptions (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982). That is to say, customers are going to decrease expectation, or increase their perception of the experience when they face dissatisfaction. Consistency theories can be categorized into two groups including dissonance theory and assimilation theory.

According to dissonance theory, when customers have conflicting thoughts about a purchase, they will adjust their behaviors about their expectations.

Assimilation theory, on the other hand, assumes that customers are reluctant to acknowledge discrepancies from previously purchasing (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988).

2.2.1.2. Contrast Theory

Contrast theory asserts that if the performance of service or product is less than expected, it causes dissatisfaction. On the other hand, if the performance of a service or product is above expectations, an individual's reaction will be positive and satisfaction will ensue.

Although consistency theories compare satisfaction and expectations, contrast theories compare satisfaction and performance. To sum up, satisfaction is influenced by the outcome of the comparison between expectations and performance.

2.2.1.3. Assimilation-Contrast Theory

Assimilation-contrast theory suggests that satisfaction is shaped by the magnitude of the discrepancy between expectations and perceived performance.

The main point in this theory is that if the discrepancy between performance and expectations is small, customers will adapt their perceptions to match expectations. This is same with the assimilation theory. On the other hand, if the discrepancy is large, customers will not make the adaptation. This is same with the contrast theory (Bitner, 1987).

2.2.1.4. Negativity Theory

Anderson (1973) asserted that when expectations are less than the perceived performance, or when they exceed the perceived performance, they cause the dissatisfaction. Anderson noticed that dissatisfaction occurred when expectations were not only above but also below performance even though this view has been criticized severely in later research (Oliver, 1980).

All in all, in order to predict customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, theories such as assimilation theory, contrast theory, assimilation-contrast

theory, and negativity theory may be utilized. To illustrate, when shopping in a market, every customer has different expectations. These expectations can be based on a prior experience, a market review, a word of mouth recommendation from a friend, and so on. If the product or service given in the market fails to meet expectations, a customer either decreases his or her expectation or increases his or her perception of the experience. This is the consistency theory. Instead of this, he or she can raise his or her dissatisfaction by increasing the gap between performance and expectations. This is called contrast theory.

2.2.2. Equity Theory

Equity theory is another concept used to explain consumer satisfaction. The equity is a key component in marketing exchange. (Bagozzi, 1975) When a consumer perceives an exchange to be equitable, the theory predicts that he or she will be more satisfied. When a customer perceives an exchange as inequitable, he will feel less satisfied, on the other hand. That is why; the equity theory claims that individuals in an inequitable exchange will become distressed (Bitner, 1987).

Equity theory is classified by two dimensions which are traditional equity theory and contemporary equity theory. Traditional equity theory analyzes single inputs and outcomes such as hours worked and total pay, while the contemporary equity theory examines the multiple inputs and outputs such as time, money, and effort.

In addition, equity theory appears to be similar to the negativity theory in the disconfirmation of expectation theories. Nevertheless, their judgment processes are not same. Equity judgments involve the consideration of inputs to evaluate outcomes. Disconfirmation judgments (negativity theory), on the other hand, involve outcomes. Although fundamentally dissimilar, both the disconfirmation of expectation theories and equity theory involve some type of comparison process. In the disconfirmation of expectation theory, customers compare prior expectations with perceived product or service performance in reaching a satisfaction determination. The equity theory also involves a comparison between the consumers' net benefits with those of the seller's.

In conclusion, what is clear in this chapter is that customer satisfaction is a part of the disconfirmation arising from the discrepancy between expectations and performance (Anderson 1973; Oliver 1980). When performance exceeds expectations, satisfaction occurs. When expectations exceed perceived performance, dissatisfaction occurs. Although there have been studies using equity theory (Mohr & Bitner, 1995), most researchers have preferred using disconfirmation of expectation theories to study customer satisfaction decisions (Bitner 1987, 1990; Bitner et al. 1990; Clow et al. 1996, 1997; Folkes 1984; Huang & Smith, 1996; Parasuraman et al. 1985; Solomon et al. 1985).

2.3. Predictors of Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer expectation, disconfirmation, and perceived performance in combination explain 78 percent of the total variation in satisfaction. (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982) These three variables had the most substantial effects on consumer satisfaction (Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988). The most important variable is disconfirmation, the second is perceived performance, and the last is customer expectations.

2.3.1. Consumer Expectations

Expectations contribute independently to satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Moreover, the studies proved that the initial level of expectation is a predictor of satisfaction (Bearden & Teel 1983; Swan & Trawick, 1981). Several researchers noticed a significantly positive relationship between expectation and consumer satisfaction (Tse & Wilton, 1988). High expectations result in high satisfaction, while low expectations lead to low satisfaction.

Nevertheless, some researchers claimed that in addition to expectation, consumers may use other criteria, such as past experience, equity, and sellers' promises as standards against which perceived performance may be compared (Woodruff et al. 1991).

2.3.2. Disconfirmation

As discussed earlier, the disconfirmation effect is accepted as a strong element in satisfaction decisions. It is generally agreed that the state of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a reaction to a comparison. The comparison involves some standards and a perceived experience, such as buying a product, receiving service from a marketer (Woodruff et al. 1991). Satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the evaluative reaction to that divergence in perception that consumers compare perceived experience with their standards.

2.3.3. Perceived Performance

As discussed before, perceived performance has been included in the disconfirmation of expectation model. When perceived performance was included as an independent factor, an important relationship between perceived performance and satisfaction was observed (Carsky 1989; Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Swan 1988; Tse 1990).

In addition, Tse and Wilton (1988) supported the importance of perceived performance in consumer satisfaction. Perceived performance explained 65% of the variation in satisfaction in their study. Whenever a product performs well, a consumer is likely to be satisfied, regardless of the levels of the pre-existing comparison standard and disconfirmation.

2.4. The Measurement of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction in business is an important phenomenon. Also, Customer satisfaction and purchasing behavior are related with each other. Customers' post-purchase perception of products and services directly affects their re-purchase decisions. Besides, word of mouth influences other people; that is, new consumers are influenced by experienced consumers.

If the managers don't understand service quality and cannot measure customer satisfaction, it is not going to be easy to expand businesses, as customers will be lost. That is why measuring customer satisfaction has become a fundamental concept in business. And the service industry needs to design an effective system to assess customer satisfaction so that it can easily improve its products and services.

A systematic process of customer satisfaction measurement is not easy. Indeed, the weakest measurements being used by companies are concerned with customer satisfaction. This statement supports the need for more reliable measurements of the key drivers of customer satisfaction. By adjusting internal processes around those behaviors, companies will be successful in satisfying their customers (Heskett et al., 1994).

In organizational process, active measurement of satisfaction levels will provide good explanations that can be used in meeting customer expectations.

Day (1977) asserted that studying subdivisions of service and integrating them subsequently may help an evaluation of customers' real feelings.

There are four constructs:

1. Customer expectation: customer benefits planned before purchasing products and services. It is the expected quality of products and services.
2. Product/service quality: Customers' perception after purchasing. It is compared with customer expectation.
3. Disparity: The differences of customer expectation and service quality. The differences will influence the evaluation customers give to the service.
4. Customer satisfaction: When service quality equals customer expectation, they are satisfied, and vice versa. If customer expectation is greater than service quality, then customer is dissatisfied.

There are seven factors determining customer satisfaction according to Kuo (1999). These are:

1. Corporate image,
2. Equipment,
3. Service content,
4. Price,
5. Convenience,

6. Staff, and

7. Procedure.

Huang, on the other hand, suggested five factors for evaluating customer satisfaction: staff, service, and overall performance of products, product, and closeness to expectation (Hung, 1998).

There are many scales for measuring customer satisfaction. The most well known measurement scale is simple satisfaction, mixed, expectation, attitude, and emotional rating scales:

1. Simple Satisfaction Rating Scale:

This scale measures customer satisfaction as Completely Satisfied, Very Satisfied, A Little Satisfied and Not Satisfied. (From 7 to 1)

2. Mixed Rating Scale:

This scale evaluates customer satisfaction from Very Satisfied to Not Satisfied. Very Satisfied and Not Satisfied are at opposite ends of the scale. (From 7 to 1)

3. Expectation Rating Scale:

This scale rates service quality as opposed to customer expectation. Measurement standards are the difference between customer expectation and perception to the real service received.

4. Attitude Rating Scale:

This scale assesses customer attitude and feelings towards services, from Like Very Much, Like, Do not Like to Dislike Very

Much. (From 1 to 3, 5 or 7) While 1 shows dissatisfied, 7 shows satisfied.

5. Emotional Rating Scale:

This scale measures customers' emotions towards a service. Positive emotion is a result of satisfaction and negative emotion is a result of dissatisfaction. This research adopted Mixed Scale with 5 rating ranges. (That is, from 5 to 1)

Moreover, businesses should compare the strength of relationship of each item with satisfaction level and determine the sequence for improvement in every survey. Japanese Efficiency Association suggested a ranking system including:

1. Ordinarily items:

Items that don't have a strong effect on satisfaction and customers are highly satisfied with them. Presently, any change is not necessary.

2. Questionable items:

Items that don't have a strong effect on satisfaction and customers are not very satisfied with them.

3. Problematical items:

Items that have a strong effect on satisfaction. Presently, customers are not very satisfied with them.

4. Perfect items:

Items that have a strong effect on satisfaction. Presently, customers are very satisfied with them.

In conclusion, measurement of customer satisfaction is an invaluable process for companies. If companies do not try to measure customer satisfaction, they will lose customers.

2.5. Consequences of Customer Satisfaction

There are primarily two outcomes of customer satisfactions: customer complaints and customer loyalty. While customer dissatisfaction results in customer complaints, outcome of customer satisfaction is customer loyalty.

2.5.1. Customer Complaints

Customer complaints are the outcomes of customer dissatisfaction expressed in voice responses (complaining to seller), private responses (complaining to neighbors), and third-party responses (Singh, 1988). That is, if a customer is dissatisfied, then he or she is going to complain either to the seller, neighbor, or a third party. The findings of Zeithaml et al. (1996) confirmed the three-dimension typology of complaining behavior.

2.5.2. Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty is the result of customer satisfaction. Especially, when a customer continues purchasing a product or service despite having faced some problems or displeasure previously, customer loyalty is in the top level.

On the other hand, the conceptualization of loyalty has often remained limited (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). Customer loyalty was described as: "The biased behavioral response, expressed, by some decision making unit, with respect to one financial service provider out of a set of financial service providers, which is a function of psychological processes resulting from commitment." (Bloemer & Odekerken-Schroder, 35)

Oliver (1999) argued that none of the definitions of loyalty included all three components of cognition, affect, and behavioral intention. That is why, he acknowledged customer loyalty as:

"A deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1999:34).

With regard to the particular aspects of customer loyalty, Cronin and Taylor (1992) focused solely on repurchase intentions, while Boulding, et al. (1993) measured repurchase intentions. In addition, the results of Zeithaml et al. (1996) study led to conclusion that dimensions of behavior intentions were loyalty and willingness to pay more. The attribute of loyalty included items regarding word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions.

2.6. The Determinants of Satisfaction

SERVQUAL, has been the focus of examination by several researchers (such as Babakus & Mangold, 1992; Brown et al. 1993; Carman 1990; Cronin

& Taylor, 1994; Parasuraman et al. 1985, 1988, 1994; Zeithaml et al. 1990). This instrument not only has pioneered much debate regarding the definition of service quality and customer satisfaction, but also has been a foundation for exploring relevant methods of measurement.

As discussed before, Parasuraman et al. (1985) have identified five dimensions comprising consumers' expectations and perceptions of service quality. These dimensions became the foundation of their 22 item instrument (Parasuraman et al. 1988). A seven-point scale anchored by strongly agree (7) and strongly disagree (1) was applied to the responses. Expectation items were sorted to form the first section of the instrument and perception items formed the second section of the instrument. 22 paired items representing five dimensions were finally identified.

Several researchers have discussed the utilization of an expectations-performance gap for measuring service quality (Babakus & Boiler 1992; Brown et al. 1993; Carman 1990; Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Teas 1993).

Moreover, Carman (1990) studied to determine if the ten dimensions were stable or not across different organizations. Nevertheless, Carman could not integrate the original ten dimensions consistently into the five dimensions Parasuraman had suggested.

The properties of obtaining difference scores are unclear. The procedure is less desirable since respondents are asked to rate expectations and perceptions after having experienced the service (Carman, 1990). Carman

also questioned the practicality of administering an instrument which expected customers to complete two scales during their service encounter.

Brown et al. (1993) repeated concerns about the properties of difference scores. These are:

- Low measures of reliability may decrease correlations between constructs, which can be misinterpreted as demonstrating validity;
- Difference scores often demonstrate poor reliability;
- Variance restriction results since the component scores reflected by the expected level are almost always higher than the perceived level;
- Misinterpretations of validity make construct validity questionable.

2.7. Customer Satisfaction and Related Constructs

Between the customer satisfaction and service quality, there is a high relationship for which researchers suggested different and conflicting definitions. The following identifications exhibit the lack of agreement among researchers about these conceptions.

- Satisfaction is an antecedent to service quality (Bolton & Drew, 1991).
- Service quality is an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Higher levels of perceived service quality result in increased customer satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor 1992).

- Customer satisfaction has a stronger influence on purchase intentions than service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992).
- Perceived service quality is viewed as the degree and direction of divergence between consumers' perception of actual performance and their expectations (Parasuraman et al. 1988).
- Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction are shaped by the perceived performance of service components and a disagreement about performance and expectations (Oliver 1981).

On the other hand, researchers have asserted that much equivocality exists between the constructs of customer satisfaction and service quality.

Parasuraman, supporting other researchers such as Bitner, Bolton, Drew, Carman, considered that service quality is an overall evaluation similar to an attitude. Nevertheless, customer satisfaction is a transitory judgment made during specific transactions. That is, the evaluation during transaction between the customer and product or service is satisfaction. According to Parasuraman, respondents from focus groups gave several illustrations when they were satisfied with a specific service but did not feel the service firm was of high quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). However, the responses of focus groups might reflect ambiguity in consumers' and managers' understanding of the difference between the two concepts (Cronin & Taylor, 1994).

In addition, satisfaction is related to the confirmation and disconfirmation of expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Also, disconfirmation is a key element of satisfaction (Oliver 1981) with the following characteristics:

- Zero disconfirmation indicates that performance was just as expected (satisfied),
- Positive disconfirmation denotes that performance was better than expected (full satisfied), and
- Negative disconfirmation signifies worse than expected (dissatisfied).

Another lack of agreement is about the construct of disconfirmed expectations. While Parasuraman et al. (1988) determined disconfirmed expectations to be predictors of perceived service quality; Oliver (1981) signified disconfirmed expectations to be predictors of satisfaction.

Moreover, expectations defined in a service quality model refer to what customers feel a service provider should offer (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Oliver (1981), on the other hand, asserted a customer satisfaction model which views expectations as predictions about what a service provider would propose.

To sum up, although assessment about satisfaction and service quality seems to result from an evaluation of a service provider's performance (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) there is a little agreement. It can be concluded that they are related, but not equivalent (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

In conclusion, in order to solve the ambiguity issues among researchers about defining the concepts of service quality and customer satisfaction, Cronin and Taylor (1994) proposed that service quality should be defined as a long-term attitude and customer satisfaction as a transaction-specific judgment. Following this recommendation, measures of customer satisfaction rather than service quality seem more applicable.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is designed to examine the relationships between the perceptions of the customers, contact personnel and managers of Kuralkan Company. This chapter provides a discussion of the research methodology used in this study. It includes information about Kuralkan Company, an explanation about Gap analysis, sample selection and data collection procedure, the research instrument and reliability analysis.

3.1. Kuralkan Company

Kuralkan is a joint stock company and a member of Kuralkan Holding. Entry of the group into the automotive industry dates back to 1952. It took over MZ distributorship in TURKEY in 1987 as a first step into the motorcycle sector. The milestone in the history of Kuralkan Company may be summarized as follows;

- 1987 Turkish agency of the German MZ.
- 1995 Start to produce MZ 2-stroke motorcycles in Turkey.
- 1998 Start to produce Kanuni 4-stroke motorcycles.
- 2000 Distributorship of Peugeot Scooters.
- 2002 Production of new models.
- 2005 Exporting Kanuni motorcycles to worldwide.
- 1952 Establishment as an automotive spare part seller in Van.

- 2007 36 different types of Motorcycle, Scooters, ATV
- 2008 Automotive sector.

Since 1995, it has been producing and exporting motorcycles under the brand, "Kanuni." New Kanuni headquarter got into effect in September 2006, in Tuzla/Istanbul/Turkey. This factory is near "Sabiha Gökçen" airport. It spans over a 50.000 square meters area that the largest in the motorcycle sector in TURKEY. Kanuni aims at using domestic resources and keeping with up-to-date worldwide motorcycle technology via its technology and quality control departments and more than 20 years of experience. In its factory, it can produce 1000 motorcycles per day in three shifts; it employs in 500 employees currently. It is the most dependable brand in supplying spare parts and after sales service in Turkey.

3.2. Gap Analysis

As discussed earlier, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988) have performed a series of studies on service quality and customer satisfaction. They formulated a service-quality model in which a set of 'gaps' exist. These gaps may exist for a number of different reasons. These gaps are:

1. The gap between customer's expectations and management's perception.
2. The gap between management's perception and service quality specifications.

3. The gap between service quality specifications and service delivery.

4. The gap between actual service delivery and external communications.

5. The gap between perceived service and expected service.

This research is limited to examining the differences between the perceptions of employees and customers; that is, the gaps between customer's perception, contact person's perception and manager's perception.

In most companies, managers do not understand demands of customers exactly. They usually use their own evaluations in their efforts to satisfy their customers. They quite often assess the satisfaction of customers according to their perspectives. In addition, contact personnel, like managers, do not approach the problems of customers from the customers' perspective.

In conclusion, service firm executives may not always be aware of the characteristics customer value most. They may not know the features of services that are important to customers. Such misunderstandings may lead the management to make a chain of bad decisions.

3.3. Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted within certain limitations:

- The participants in this study were selected from among the customers of Kuralkan Company, contact personnel and managers in Kuralkan Company on a convenience basis. Hence, the results and conclusions may not be universally applicable, but may only be specific to Kuralkan Company.
- The original questionnaire was written in Turkish; translated into English and final result will be reported in English.
- Results were on the basis of the data reported in the questionnaires completed by the customers, contact personnel, and managers from the Kuralkan Company.
- The survey participants (for customers) must have at least once purchased a motorcycle from the Kuralkan Company. Thus, they have already professed a preference for Kuralkan.
- The survey invitation may not have reached a representative sample of the whole target population.

3.4. Application Method

The questionnaires that included twenty seven questions were applied on 211 customers, 26 contact personnel and 12 managers. The results were listed to the Microsoft office excel 2007. This information was used in the analysis methods.

As the methods of the study; the frequency analysis method was used. In order to use these analysis methods, SPSS 13.0 and PHStat for Excel 2000 for Windows package software were utilized.

3.5. Sample Selection and Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected from customers of Kuralkan Company, contact personnel and managers of Kuralkan Company using survey method.

Firstly, in order to get information from the managers and contact personnel, an initial interview was conducted with Said Kuralkan who is the general manager of Kuralkan Company. During this interview, some notes were taken about the company and the survey to be carried out was discussed. Important cases during the survey process and the sensibility about collecting the results were mentioned. After the interview and general manager's approval, the survey was sent to 12 managers and 26 contact personnel through e-mail and received back in the same way.

Secondly, a phone call was made to the director of department of Human Resources and he was informed about the above-mentioned survey which will be carried out on customers. 211 surveys were distributed by the Human Resources department. 180 surveys out of 211 were returned. 28 of these were discarded due to a variety of irregularities among responses.

3.6. The Research Instrument

Three sets of questionnaires were distributed to managers, contact personnel and the customers in order to measure the gaps. These questionnaires are presented in the Appendix G, H, and I.

While the questionnaires distributed to the customers were aimed at measuring the perceived customer satisfaction, questionnaires distributed to the contact personnel and managers were aimed at uncovering their perceptions of customers' satisfaction.

Questionnaires were prepared in five parts, including personal behaviors (Q1-Q5), customer services (Q6-Q12), physical conditions (Q13-Q18), product (Q19-Q23), and general (Q24-Q27).

Every question in the questionnaire was asked to 211 customers, 26 contact personnel, and 12 managers.

A frequency analysis was conducted on the collected data using the SPSS. While the degrees of satisfaction were taken from the frequency table, the others were taken from the table of statistics.

Questionnaires given in Appendix A, B, and C indicate the questions asked to the customers, contact personnel, and managers respectively. Each question was evaluated on a five-point scale, where

- 1 represents extremely low level of satisfaction.
- 2 represents below average level of satisfaction.

- 3 represents average level of satisfaction.
- 4 represents above average level of satisfaction.
- 5 represents extremely high level of satisfaction.
- Mean presents the average of the degree of satisfaction.
- Mode shows the degree which are repeated mostly.
- Std Dev indicates the standard deviations.

3.7. Reliability

In this study, cronbach alpha has been used in order to determine reliability of the scales. Considering questions related groups in the reliability of analysis, every factor of the coefficient of the cronbach alpha has been calculated as personal behaviors, 0.748; customer services, 0.819; physical conditions, 0.881; product, 0.764; general, 0.796.

Cronbach's alpha can range from 0.0 to 1.0 and reflect the strength of the relationship between items within a scale. Nunnally and Berstein (1994) claim that if variances of the coefficients of the alpha 0.70, the research are reliable. Also, Cortina (1993) suggested that the alpha coefficients is greater than 0.6, the research was acceptable.

The results indicates that all the variances of the coefficients of the Cronbach alpha are higher than 0.7. While the factor of physical conditions with 0,881 is the most reliable level, the lowest level of alpha is personal behaviors with 0,748. The results that are obtained in the research indicate

that the results of the research are reliable. So, more detailed statistical analysis may be done in the following process of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The results of the data analysis are presented in this chapter. As mentioned earlier, the data were collected from three samples. Tests were conducted to compare the means, mode and standard deviation among the three sample groups which comprise customers, contact personnel and managers, respectively. In additions, frequency analysis from descriptive analysis within the program SPSS are used in order to describe the means and the differences between the means.

As discussed before, the questionnaire consists of five parts which are 'personal behaviors' including five questions, 'customer services' including seven questions, 'physical conditions' including six questions, the 'product' including five questions, and 'general' including four questions.

In this chapter, in the first part, there will be some discussions about mean values analysis which are the comparisons of mean values within and between the groups. Afterwards, comparison of the mean values between the questions for the customers, contact personnel, and managers will be presented. In the second part, there will be some explanations, respectively, about the gap analysis between the customers and contact personnel and the customers and managers.

4.1. Intergroup Comparisons for Categories

Table 1 indicates the mean values of customers, contact personnel, and managers for all questions. Also, the mean values at the end of each part indicate the average values for that part. Besides, the overall value indicates the overall average of the mean values of all questions.

TABLE 1. MEAN VALUES FOR ALL QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS		Mean Values For		
		Cust.	C. P.	Man.
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	3,07	4,00	4,67
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	2,99	3,08	4,75
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	2,13	4,12	4,58
4	Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably	4,09	4,72	4,83
5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	3,93	4,62	4,50
Personal Behaviors		3,24	4,11	4,67
6	Availability of authorized personnel	3,69	3,35	3,92
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	4,01	4,54	4,00
8	Handling of complaints	4,06	4,08	3,92
9	Practical solutions to problems	4,43	4,19	4,17
10	Sufficiency of solutions	3,75	4,65	4,67
11	Meeting after sale expectations	3,09	3,12	4,17
12	Presentation of after sale information	3,06	4,19	3,92

Customer Services		3,73	4,02	4,11
13	Provision of directions while entering the store	3,27	4,01	4,67
14	Level of comfort in the store design	3,20	2,15	3,42
15	Sufficiency of waiting room	2,26	1,77	2,25
16	Offers of tea and coffee	3,06	3,96	3,83
17	Waiting time for service	3,14	4,04	3,25
18	Physical conditions of the store	3,02	3,12	4,00
Physical Conditions		2,99	3,18	3,57
19	Product's quality	3,07	4,08	4,75
20	Width of the range of products	3,84	4,04	4,00
21	New product development performance	3,20	3,00	3,92
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	2,91	2,23	4,17
23	Meeting product expectations	3,09	3,92	4,67
Product		3,22	3,45	4,30
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	3,04	4,08	3,83
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	3,92	3,35	4,08
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	4,23	4,38	4,75
27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	3,20	4,08	4,42
General		3,60	3,97	4,27
OVERALL		3,36	3,74	4,15

Source: Appendices A, B, and C

The first important observation from Table One is that for all five categories the mean values of managers are greater than those of contact personnel; and those of contact personnel are greater than those of customers. These may be summarized more specifically as

- Personal Behaviors 4.67 > 4.11 > 3.24
- Customer Services 4.11 > 4.02 > 3.73
- Physical Conditions 3.57 > 3.18 > 2.99
- Product 4.30 > 3.45 > 3.22
- General 4.27 > 3.97 > 3.60
- Overall 4.15 > 3.74 > 3.36

While there are several exceptions to this sequence in the case of individual questions, it is apparent that in all categories, managers' perceptions of their customers' probable satisfaction is higher than the perceptions of contact personnel. The customers' perceived satisfaction is the lowest among the three, ranging between average and above average.

The highest perceived satisfaction among managers is for personnel behaviors (4.67), followed by product (4.30), general (4.27), customer services (4.11), and physical conditions (3.57).

The five factors' order changes in several respects when contact personnel's evaluations are considered:

Personal behaviors again ranks at the top (4.11), followed by customer services (4.02), general (3.97), product (3.45), and physical conditions (3.18). It is interesting to note that these two groups' ratings are all average or above.

Customers' evaluations point at important shifts, however. The highest perceived satisfaction is in the case of customer services (3.73), followed by general (3.60), personal behaviors (3.24), product (3.22), and finally physical conditions (2.99) which is the only ranking below average, albeit very slightly.

Interesting findings are observed when the mean differences are compared for all three groups. The differences between the customer and manager means are as follows:

- Personal Behaviors: 1.43
- Product: 1.08
- General: 0.67
- Physical Conditions: 0.58
- Customer Services: 0.38

The differences between customer and contact personnel means are as follows:

- Personal Behaviors: 0.87
- General: 0.37
- Customer Services: 0.29
- Product: 0.23
- Physical Conditions: 0.19

The largest divergence is found in the case of personal behaviors for both customers vs. managers (1.43) and customers vs. contact personnel (0.87). Divergences between customers and contact personnel are substantially smaller in other categories and vary in a small range (between 0.37 and 0.19). However, in the case of customers vs. managers, divergences are relatively larger; e.g. product (1.08), general (0.67), physical conditions (0.58), and customer services (0.38).

4.2. Intragroup Comparison of Question Items for the Customer Group

To compare the customers' evaluations for individual question items, the mean values for each question are arranged in descending order in Table Two.

TABLE.2 MEAN VALUES FOR ALL QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO DESCENDING ORDER FOR THE CUSTOMERS

QUESTIONS		Mean Values For Customers
9	Practical solutions to problems	4,43
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	4,23
4	Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably	4,09
8	Handling of complaints	4,06
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	4,01

5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	3,93
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	3,92
20	Width of the range of products	3,84
10	Sufficiency of solutions	3,75
6	Availability of authorized personnel	3,69
13	Provision of directions while entering the store	3,27
14	Level of comfort in the store design	3,20
21	New product development performance	3,20
27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	3,20
17	Waiting time for service	3,14
11	Meeting after sale expectations	3,09
23	Meeting product expectations	3,09
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	3,07
19	Product's quality	3,07
12	Presentation of after sale information	3,06
16	Offers of tea and coffee	3,06
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	3,04
18	Physical conditions of the store	3,02
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	2,99
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	2,91

15	Sufficiency of waiting room	2,26
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	2,13
OVERALL		3,36

Table 2 indicates that the highest mean, 4.43, for the customers is "practical solutions to problems". The second is "image of Kuralkan motorcycles" (4.23). The third is "answering customers' questions in detail and understandably" (4.09). The lowest level, 2.13, is "understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately" followed by "sufficiency of waiting room" (2.26) and "adequacy of operating manual" (2.91).

In addition, the overall mean for the customers is 3.36. While means of questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 25, and 26 are higher than the overall mean, the others are lower on the overall mean.

4.3. Intragroup Comparison of Question Items for the Contact Personnel Group

Table 3 indicates that the highest mean, 4.72, for the contact personnel is "answering customers' questions in detail and understandably." The second is the "sufficiency of solutions" (4.65). The third is "completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes" (4.62). The lowest level, 1.77, is the

“sufficiency of waiting room”, followed by “level of comfort in store design” (2.15) and “adequacy of operating manual” (2.23).

In addition, the overall mean for the contact personnel is 3.74. While means of questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, and 27 are higher than the overall mean, the others are lower than the overall mean.

TABLE.3 MEAN VALUES FOR ALL QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO DESCENDING ORDER FOR THE CONTACT PERSONNEL

QUESTIONS		Mean Values For C. Personnel
4	Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably	4,72
10	Sufficiency of solutions	4,65
5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	4,62
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	4,54
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	4,38
9	Practical solutions to problems	4,19
12	Presentation of after sale information	4,19
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	4,12
8	Handling of complaints	4,08
19	Product's quality	4,08
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	4,08

27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	4,08
17	Waiting time for service	4,04
20	Width of the range of products	4,04
13	Provision of directions while entering the store	4,01
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	4,00
16	Offers of tea and coffee	3,96
23	Meeting product expectations	3,92
6	Availability of authorized personnel	3,35
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	3,35
11	Meeting after sale expectations	3,12
18	Physical conditions of the store	3,12
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	3,08
21	New product development performance	3,00
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	2,23
14	Level of comfort in the store design	2,15
15	Sufficiency of waiting room	1,77
OVERALL		3,74

4.4. Intragroup Comparison of Question Items for the Management

Table 4 indicates that the highest mean, 4.83, for the managers is “answering customers’ questions in detail and understandably.” The second are “welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile” and “product’s quality” (4.75 both). The lowest level, 2.25, is the “sufficiency of waiting room,” followed by “waiting time for service” (3.25) and “comfort of the store design” (3.42).

In addition, the overall mean for the managers is 4.15. While means of questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13, 19, 22, 23, 26, and 27 are higher than the overall mean, the others are lower than the overall mean.

TABLE.4 MEAN VALUES FOR ALL QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO DESCENDING ORDER FOR THE MANAGERS

QUESTIONS		Mean Values For Managers
4	Answering customers’ questions in detail and understandably	4,83
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	4,75
19	Product’s quality	4,75
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	4,75
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	4,67
10	Sufficiency of solutions	4,67

13	Provision of directions while entering the store	4,67
23	Meeting product expectations	4,67
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	4,58
5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	4,50
27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	4,42
9	Practical solutions to problems	4,17
11	Meeting after sale expectations	4,17
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	4,17
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	4,08
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	4,00
18	Physical conditions of the store	4,00
20	Width of the range of products	4,00
6	Availability of authorized personnel	3,92
8	Handling of complaints	3,92
12	Presentation of after sale information	3,92
21	New product development performance	3,92
16	Offers of tea and coffee	3,83
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	3,83
14	Level of comfort in the store design	3,42
17	Waiting time for service	3,25

15	Sufficiency of waiting room	2,25
OVERALL		4,15

To sum up, the item analysis (Tables Two, Three, and Four), there does not seem to be a unanimous agreement among managers, contact personnel, and customers as far as items that are perceived as highly satisfactory.

Customers find only items 4, 7, 8, 9, and 26 worthy of an evaluative score higher than 4.00.

Among contact personnel the number of items which one evaluated above 4.00 is larger. However, if the top five are taken in order to compare with the customers, items 4, 5, 7, 10, and 26 ought to be mentioned.

For managers, the top five are items 1, 2, 4, 19, and 26. Items 4 (answering customers' questions in detail and understandably) and 26 (image of Kuralkan motorcycles) seem to be included in the top five of all three groups.

As far as the lowest ranking items are concerned, contact personnel and managers agree that item 15 (sufficiency of the waiting room) and 14 (comfort of the store design) offer least satisfaction, customers who concur with the former, but not to latter. Their main complaint are with items 3 (understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately).

These divergences will further be discussed in the next section which offers a gap analysis.

4.5. Gap Analysis between the Customers & Contact Personnel

If results of paired samples tests are less than 0.05, it means that there is a perception gap between the customers and contact personnel according to the paired samples test. If significance is greater than 0.05, there is no significant difference between the customers' and contact personnel' perceptions.

Table 5 indicates that there is a gap between the perceptions of customers and perceptions of contact personnel in questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27 according to the paired samples test. In questions 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 20, and 21, there is no gap.

TABLE 5. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE CUSTOMERS AND CONTACT PERSONNEL

TWO SAMPLES TEST		
QUESTIONS		Customers & C. Personnel
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	0.00
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	0.84
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	0.00
4	Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably	0.01

5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	0.01
6	Availability of authorized personnel	0.25
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	0.01
8	Handling of complaints	0.78
9	Practical solutions to problems	0.18
10	Sufficiency of solutions	0.01
11	Meeting after sale expectations	0.50
12	Presentation of after sale information	0.00
13	Provision of directions while entering the store	0.01
14	Level of comfort in the store design	0.00
15	Sufficiency of waiting room	0.16
16	Offers of tea and coffee	0.01
17	Waiting time for service	0.01
18	Physical conditions of the store	0.59
19	Product's quality	0.00
20	Width of the range of products	0.46
21	New product development performance	0.13
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	0.03
23	Meeting product expectations	0.00
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	0.00
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	0.01
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	0.02
27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	0.00

Some explanations about the table 5 and 6:

- Paired samples test were applied question by question.
- While there are questions in the left hand side of the table, significances of questions are right hand sides of the table.

- Sig. (2-tailed) means that if the result of question is less than 0.05, there are a gap between the employees (contact personnel or managers) and the customers. That is, questions' results less than 0.05 indicate the existence of a problem about the perception differences between the customers and contact personnel and managers.

4.6. Gap Analysis between the Customers & Managers

Table 6 indicates that there is a gap between the perceptions of customers and perceptions of contact personnel in questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 26, and 27 according to the paired samples test. In questions 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 24, and 25 there is no gap.

TABLE 6. GAP ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE CUSTOMERS AND MANAGERS

TWO SAMPLES TEST		
QUESTIONS		Customer & Manager
1	Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting	0.01
2	Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile	0.00
3	Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately	0.00
4	Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably	0.01

5	Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes	0.28
6	Availability of authorized personnel	0.01
7	Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel	0.34
8	Handling of complaints	0.39
9	Practical solutions to problems	0.21
10	Sufficiency of solutions	0.01
11	Meeting after sale expectations	0.01
12	Presentation of after sale information	0.01
13	Provision of directions while entering the store	0.01
14	Level of comfort in the store design	0.17
15	Sufficiency of waiting room	0.55
16	Offers of tea and coffee	0.07
17	Waiting time for service	0.75
18	Physical conditions of the store	0.01
19	Product's quality	0.00
20	Width of the range of products	0.62
21	New product development performance	0.02
22	Adequacy of the operating manual	0.00
23	Meeting product expectations	0.00
24	Appropriateness of quality and price	0.34
25	Adequacy of Kuralkan products	0.59
26	The image of Kuralkan motorcycles	0.01
27	Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time	0.01

CONCLUSION

Customer satisfaction is the result of the quality of products and services perceived by customers. It is the customers' evaluation of services after purchasing (Oliver 1997; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). Satisfied customer is a core target for a company. If a customer is satisfied, it means he or she has brand loyalty. Since perceptions of service quality are a major determinant of customer satisfaction, its measurement is an essential had.

Furthermore, service quality and customer satisfaction are related to each other. A number of models have been developed to explain how service quality impacts the organizations. While the main point in Keegan's model is that customers have important position in the service provider's processes, Kerlaan determined some preventive measures in order to modeling the service quality. Also, the aim of Berry's model is getting even closer to the customer. Besides, Parasuraman suggested that the assessment of customers' expectations and perceptions is important in completing a customer orientation within an organization. He defined SERVQUAL is a service quality instrument which has been used to evaluate the differences between the expectations and perceptions of customers.

In addition, 'Disconfirmation' and 'Equity' are two well known constructs of satisfaction theories. While disconfirmation theory is simply a comparison between a service's performance and an individual's expectations, the equity theory claims that individuals in an inequitable exchange will become

distressed. When a consumer perceives an exchange to be equitable, the theory predicts that he or she will be more satisfied. When a customer perceives an exchange as inequitable, he will feel less satisfied, on the other hand.

On the basis of this theoretical background and empirical Servqual methodology, mean value analysis and gap analysis were applied to the Kuralkan Company. Kuralkan is a joint stock company and a member of Kuralkan Holding. Since 1995, it has been producing and exporting motorcycles under the brand, "Kanuni." It is the most dependable brand in supplying spare parts and after sales service in Turkey.

In addition, the questionnaires including twenty seven questions were applied on 211 customers, 26 contact personnel and 12 managers on the Kuralkan Company. The data were applied to the SPSS 13.0 and PHStat for Excel 2000 software programs. Besides, the questions in the questionnaire were separated into five parts which are personal behaviors, customer services, physical conditions, product and general.

This study consists of four parts. Chapter one and two include the general introduction about the service quality and the customer satisfaction as a review of literature. In addition, methodology is discussed in chapter three. In the last part of this study, chapter four, findings are explained in depth.

The most important outcome of this study is that there are perception gaps between the customers, contact personnel, and managers in Kuralkan

Company. Even though the authorities of Kuralkan Company claim that the gaps between the perceptions of customers, contact personnel, and managers are not so much, the gaps are quite wide according to the finding of this study. The overall mean of customer satisfaction from the perspective of the customers is 3.36. It is also 3.74 for contact personnel and 4.15 for managers. It is obvious that there is a gap between the perceptions of the customers, contact personnel, and managers.

The findings indicate that the perceived satisfaction levels for the five categories, namely, physical conditions, personal behaviors, customer services, product and general also exhibit divergences.

Finally, absences of gap between all three groups are found only for questions 8, 9, 15, and 20. Therefore, Kuralkan does not have to be worry on these items:

- Handling of complaints,
- Practical solutions to problems,
- Sufficiency of waiting room, and
- Width of the range of products.

On all other items, there seems to be rooms for improvement to narrow on eliminate the gaps.

All in all, the overall outcome of this study may be summarized in one word: "Empathy". Whenever managers or employees of a company or a firm

empathize with customers' perceptions, the customers' satisfactions will be maximized.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In addition to the findings of this research, several suggestions may be made for future research:

- Future research may employ a large sample of customers from different sections.
- Future research may consider relationship between customer satisfaction and other constructs such as brand image and customer loyalty, customer complaint, and store image.
- Future research may consider the differences of customer satisfaction within a period (for instance, one year or more.) A longitudinal study may reveal changes in the level of gaps.
- Responses (for customers) were made on the basis of recall. Future research may consider different data collection methods such as an on-site survey.
- Sample for customers was N=152 which is reasonable, but a larger sample may give greater confidence to results.
- Questionnaire was applied to only one company. If it was applied to more than one company, the results could be compared.

APPENDIX A

EVALUATIONS BY CUSTOMERS

Questions		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Mode	Std Dev
PERSONNEL BEHAVIORS	1	3	24	91	28	6	3,07	3	0,761
	2	1	38	77	34	2	2,99	3	0,746
	3	25	90	31	5	1	2,13	2	0,74
	4	3	4	29	57	59	4,09	5	0,927
	5	1	4	28	91	28	3,93	4	0,729
CUSTOMER SERVICES	6	1	13	42	72	24	3,69	4	0,863
	7	1	2	30	80	39	4,01	4	0,755
	8	2	1	28	76	45	4,06	4	0,791
	9	0	2	14	52	84	4,43	5	0,716
	10	4	7	41	71	29	3,75	4	0,908
	11	5	19	88	37	3	3,09	3	0,758
	12	3	26	86	33	4	3,06	3	0,757
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS	13	3	17	74	52	6	3,27	3	0,789
	14	1	18	84	48	1	3,2	3	0,671
	15	19	80	48	5	0	2,26	2	0,714
	16	7	24	79	37	5	3,06	3	0,848
	17	3	15	94	38	2	3,14	3	0,681
	18	2	26	92	31	1	3,02	3	0,676
THE PRODUCT	19	1	27	89	34	1	3,07	3	0,674
	20	3	3	41	74	31	3,84	4	0,841
	21	0	13	96	42	1	3,2	3	0,591

	22	6	36	80	26	4	2,91	3	0,817
	23	0	23	95	31	3	3,09	3	0,655
GENERAL	24	3	27	84	37	1	3,04	3	0,727
	25	0	3	38	79	32	3,92	4	0,733
	26	0	1	17	80	54	4,23	4	0,666
	27	1	12	97	39	3	3,2	3	0,634

APPENDIX B

EVALUATIONS BY CONTACT PERSONNEL

Questions		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Mode	Std Dev
PERSONNEL BEHAVIORS	1	0	0	4	18	4	4	4	0,57
	2	0	4	16	6	0	3,08	3	0,63
	3	0	0	5	13	8	4,12	4	0,71
	4	0	0	1	7	18	4,72	5	0,46
	5	0	0	0	10	16	4,62	5	0,5
CUSTOMER SERVICES	6	0	3	11	12	26	3,35	4	0,689
	7	0	0	1	10	15	4,54	5	0,582
	8	0	1	4	13	8	4,08	4	0,796
	9	0	0	3	15	8	4,19	4	0,634
	10	0	0	0	9	17	4,65	5	0,485
	11	0	6	11	9	0	3,12	3	0,766
	12	0	0	4	13	9	4,19	4	0,694
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS	13	0	0	6	13	7	4,01	4	0,72
	14	4	14	8	0	0	2,15	2	0,675
	15	10	12	4	0	0	1,77	2	0,71
	16	0	0	6	15	5	3,96	4	0,662
	17	0	0	6	13	7	4,04	4	0,72
	18	0	5	13	8	0	3,12	3	0,711
THE PRODUCT	19	0	0	5	14	7	4,08	4	0,688
	20	0	1	5	12	8	4,04	4	0,824
	21	0	6	14	6	0	3	3	0,693

	22	0	4	14	6	2	2,23	2	0,815
	23	0	0	6	16	4	3,92	4	0,628
GENERAL	24	0	0	4	16	6	4,08	4	0,628
	25	0	2	13	11	0	3,35	3	0,629
	26	0	0	2	12	12	4,38	4	0,637
	27	0	0	5	14	7	4,08	4	0,688

APPENDIX C

EVALUATIONS BY MANAGERS

Questions		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Mode	Std Dev
PERSONNEL BEHAVIORS	1	0	0	0	4	8	4,67	5	0,49
	2	0	0	0	3	9	4,75	5	0,45
	3	0	0	0	5	7	4,58	5	0,51
	4	0	0	0	2	10	4,83	5	0,39
	5	0	0	0	6	6	4,5	4	0,52
CUSTOMER SERVICES	6	0	0	3	7	2	3,92	4	0,669
	7	0	0	4	4	4	4	3	0,853
	8	0	0	3	7	2	3,92	4	0,669
	9	0	0	2	6	4	4,17	4	0,718
	10	0	0	0	4	8	4,67	5	0,492
	11	0	0	2	6	4	4,17	4	0,718
	12	0	0	3	7	2	3,92	4	0,669
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS	13	0	0	0	4	8	4,67	5	0,492
	14	0	1	6	4	1	3,42	3	0,793
	15	1	7	4	0	0	2,25	2	0,622
	16	0	0	4	6	2	3,83	4	0,718
	17	0	1	7	4	0	3,25	3	0,622
	18	0	0	2	8	2	4	4	0,603
THE PRODUCT	19	0	0	0	3	9	4,75	5	0,452
	20	0	0	2	8	2	4	4	0,603
	21	0	0	3	7	2	3,92	4	0,669

	22	0	0	2	6	4	4,17	4	0,718
	23	0	0	0	4	8	4,67	5	0,492
GENERAL	24	0	0	4	6	2	3,83	4	0,718
	25	0	0	2	7	3	4,08	4	0,669
	26	0	0	0	3	9	4,75	5	0,452
	27	0	0	1	5	6	4,42	5	0,669

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CUSTOMERS

Dear Mr. or Miss Kuralkan Company Customer,

This questionnaire is a part of an academic research study. The following dimensions are designed to learn your thoughts about the service provided to you by Kuralkan Company. Please think about the last time you purchased from this company. Please circle the number that best matches your expected satisfaction level on each dimension. Choosing a 5 means that your satisfaction level on that statement is very high; and choosing 1 will indicate very high degree of dissatisfaction. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Your efforts to complete the survey will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Extremely Low; 2: Below Average; 3: Average; 4: Above Average; 5: Extremely High)

A) Personal Behaviors

- 1)** Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting
- 2)** Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile
- 3)** Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately
- 4)** Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably
- 5)** Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Customer Services

- 6) Availability of authorized personnel
- 7) Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel
- 8) Handling of complaints
- 9) Practical solutions to problems
- 10) Sufficiency of solutions
- 11) Meeting after sale expectations
- 12) Presentation of after sale information

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Physical Conditions

- 13) Provision of directions while entering the store
- 14) Level of comfort in the store design
- 15) Sufficiency of waiting room
- 16) Offers of tea and coffee
- 17) Waiting time for service
- 18) Physical conditions of the store

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) The Products

- 19) Product's quality
- 20) Width of the range of products
- 21) New product development performance
- 22) Adequacy of the operating manual
- 23) Meeting product expectations

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) General

- 24) Appropriateness of quality and price
- 25) Adequacy of Kuralkan products compared to competitors
- 26) The image of Kanuni motorcycles in the market
- 27) Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CONTACT PERSONNEL

Dear Mr. or Miss Kuralkan Company Contact Person,

This questionnaire is a part of an academic research study. The following dimensions are designed to learn your thoughts about the service provided by Kuralkan Company. Please think about your company and how you believe customers would answer each of the questions if they purchased something from your company. Please circle the number that best matches your customers' expected satisfaction level on each dimension. Choosing a 5 means that the customers' satisfaction level on that statement is very high; and choosing 1 will indicate very high degree of dissatisfaction. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Your efforts to complete the survey will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Extremely Low; 2: Below Average; 3: Average; 4: Above Average; 5: Extremely High)

A) Personal Behaviors

- 1) Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting
- 2) Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile
- 3) Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately
- 4) Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably
- 5) Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Customer Services

- 6) Availability of authorized personnel
- 7) Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel
- 8) Handling of complaints
- 9) Practical solutions to problems
- 10) Sufficiency of solutions
- 11) Meeting after sale expectations
- 12) Presentation of after sale information

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Physical Conditions

- 13) Provision of directions while entering the store
- 14) Level of comfort in the store design
- 15) Sufficiency of waiting room
- 16) Offers of tea and coffee
- 17) Waiting time for service
- 18) Physical conditions of the store

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) The Products

- 19) Product's quality
- 20) Width of the range of products
- 21) New product development performance
- 22) Adequacy of the operating manual
- 23) Meeting product expectations

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) General

- 24) Appropriateness of quality and price
- 25) Adequacy of Kuralkan products compared to competitors
- 26) The image of Kanuni motorcycles in the market
- 27) Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX F

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE MANAGERS

Dear Mr. or Miss Kuralkan Company Manager,

This questionnaire is a part of an academic research study. The following dimensions are designed to learn your thoughts about the service provided by Kuralkan Company. Please think about your company and how you believe customers would answer each of the questions if they purchased something from your company. Please circle the number that best matches your customers' expected satisfaction level on each dimension. Choosing a 5 means that the customers' satisfaction level on that statement is very high; and choosing 1 will indicate very high degree of dissatisfaction. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Your efforts to complete the survey will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Extremely Low; 2: Below Average; 3: Average; 4: Above Average; 5: Extremely High)

A) Personal Behaviors

- 1) Apologizing to the customer for keeping him waiting
- 2) Welcoming customer warmly and providing service with a smile
- 3) Understanding customers' needs well and meeting them appropriately
- 4) Answering customers' questions in detail and understandably
- 5) Completing customer's requests rapidly and without mistakes

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Customer Services

- 6) Availability of authorized personnel
- 7) Know-how and experience level of authorized personnel
- 8) Handling of complaints
- 9) Practical solutions to problems
- 10) Sufficiency of solutions
- 11) Meeting after sale expectations
- 12) Presentation of after sale information

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Physical Conditions

- 13) Provision of directions while entering the store
- 14) Level of comfort in the store design
- 15) Sufficiency of waiting room
- 16) Offers of tea and coffee
- 17) Waiting time for service
- 18) Physical conditions of the store

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) The Products

- 19) Product's quality
- 20) Width of the range of products
- 21) New product development performance
- 22) Adequacy of the operating manual
- 23) Meeting product expectations

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) General

- 24) Appropriateness of quality and price
- 25) Adequacy of Kuralkan products compared to competitors
- 26) The image of Kanuni motorcycles in the market
- 27) Intention to prefer Kuralkan next time

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX G

MÜŞTERİLERE UYGULANAN ANKET

Sayın Kuralkan Firması Müşterisi,

Bu anket, bir akademik araştırmanın bir bölümüdür. Aşağıdaki ifadeler Kuralkan Firması tarafından sağlanan hizmetler hakkında sizin düşüncelerinizi öğrenmek için hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen bu firmadan en son alışveriş ettiğiniz zamanı düşünün. Lütfen her bir ifadeye sizin memnuniyet derecenizi en iyi karşılayan sayıyı yuvarlak içine alın. 5 rakamını yuvarlak içine almak, bu ifadedeki durumdan çok memnun olduğunuzu; 1 rakamını seçmek ise, hiç memnun olmadığınızı göstermiş olacaktır. Şimdiden zamanınızı ayırıp ankete katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Sizin cevaplarınıza göre araştırma şekil alacaktır.

Saygılarımla,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Çok Düşük; 2: Vasatın Altında; 3: Vasat; 4: Vasatın Üstünde; 5: Çok Yüksek)

A) Personel Davranışları

- 1) Müşteriye bekletildiği için özür dilenmesi
- 2) Müşterinin sıcak karşılanıp güler yüzlü hizmet sunulması
- 3) Müşterinin ihtiyaçlarının iyi anlaşılıp doğru çözümler sunulması
- 4) Müşterinin sorularının detaylı olarak ve anlaşılır biçimde cevaplandırılması
- 5) Müşteri ile ilgili işlemlerin hızlı ve hatasız bir şekilde sonuçlandırılması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Müşteri Hizmetleri

- 6) Müşterinin yetkililere ulaşabilmesi

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

- 7) Yetkililerin bilgi ve tecrübe seviyesi
8) Müşterinin şikâyetinin cevaplanması
9) Müşterinin şikâyetine pratik çözümler bulabilmesi
10) Sunulan çözümlerin yeterliliği
11) Satış sonrası beklentilerin karşılanması
12) Satış sonrası bilgi aktarımı

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Fiziki Koşullar

- 13) Şube girişindeki yönlendirme
14) Şube yerleşiminin ferahlığı
15) Yeterli bekleme yerinin varlığı
16) Çay & kahve ikramı
17) Şubede hizmet alma için bekletilme süresi
18) Şubenin fiziki koşulları hakkında genel değerlendirme

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) Ürün

- 19) Ürün kalitesi
20) Ürün çeşitlerinin zenginliği
21) Yeni ürün geliştirme performansı
22) Taşıyla ilgili kullanım bilgilerinin yeterliği
23) Beklentilerin karşılanması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) Genel

- 24) Fiyat kalite uygunluğu
25) Rakip ürünlere göre, Kuralkan'ın düzeyi
26) Kanuni motosikletlerin piyasadaki imajı
27) Bir dahaki sefere Kuralkan firmasını tercih etme niyeti

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX H

MÜŞTERİ TEMSİLCİLERİNE UYGULANAN ANKET

Sayın Kuralkan Firması Müşteri Temsilcisi,

Bu anket, bir akademik araştırmanın bir bölümüdür. Aşağıdaki ifadeler Kuralkan Firması tarafından sağlanan hizmetler hakkında sizin düşüncenizi öğrenmek için hazırlanmıştır. Kuralkan Firması müşterilerinin firma hakkındaki memnuniyetlerini ifade eden durumlar aşağıda belirtilmiştir. Lütfen her bir ifadeye, size göre müşterilerin memnuniyet derecesini en iyi karşılayan sayıyı yuvarlak içine alın. 5 rakamını yuvarlak içine almak, bu ifadedeki durumdan müşterilerin çok memnun olduklarını; 1 rakamını seçmek ise, hiç memnun olmadıklarını göstermiş olacaktır. Şimdiden zamanınızı ayırıp ankete katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Sizin cevaplarınıza göre araştırma şekil alacaktır.

Saygılarımla,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Çok Düşük; 2: Vasatın Altında; 3: Vasat; 4: Vasatın Üstünde; 5: Çok Yüksek)

A) Personel Davranışları

- 1) Müşteriye bekletildiği için özür dilenmesi
- 2) Müşterinin sıcak karşılanıp güler yüzlü hizmet sunulması
- 3) Müşterinin ihtiyaçlarının iyi anlaşılıp doğru çözümler sunulması
- 4) Müşterinin sorularının detaylı olarak ve anlaşılır biçimde cevaplandırılması
- 5) Müşteri ile ilgili işlemlerin hızlı ve hatasız bir şekilde sonuçlandırılması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Müşteri Hizmetleri

- 6) Müşterinin yetkililere ulaşabilmesi

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

- 7) Yetkililerin bilgi ve tecrübe seviyesi
8) Müşterinin şikâyetinin cevaplanması
9) Müşterinin şikâyetine pratik çözümler bulabilmesi
10) Sunulan çözümlerin yeterliliği
11) Satış sonrası beklentilerin karşılanması
12) Satış sonrası bilgi aktarımı

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Fiziki Koşullar

- 13) Şube girişindeki yönlendirme
14) Şube yerleşiminin ferahlığı
15) Yeterli bekleme yerinin varlığı
16) Çay & kahve ikramı
17) Şubede hizmet alma için bekletilme süresi
18) Şubenin fiziki koşulları hakkında genel değerlendirme

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) Ürün

- 19) Ürün kalitesi
20) Ürün çeşitlerinin zenginliği
21) Yeni ürün geliştirme performansı
22) Taşıyla ilgili kullanım bilgilerinin yeterliği
23) Beklentilerin karşılanması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) Genel

- 24) Fiyat kalite uygunluğu
25) Rakip ürünlere göre, Kuralkan'ın düzeyi
26) Kanuni motosikletlerin piyasadaki imajı
27) Bir dahaki sefere Kuralkan firmasını tercih etme niyeti

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX I

YÖNETİCİLERE UYGULANAN ANKET

Sayın Kuralkan Firması Yöneticisi,

Bu anket, bir akademik araştırmanın bir bölümüdür. Aşağıdaki ifadeler Kuralkan Firması tarafından sağlanan hizmetler hakkında sizin düşüncenizi öğrenmek için hazırlanmıştır. Kuralkan Firması müşterilerinin firma hakkındaki memnuniyetlerini ifade eden durumlar aşağıda belirtilmiştir. Lütfen her bir ifadeye, size göre müşterilerin memnuniyet derecesini en iyi karşılayan sayıyı yuvarlak içine alın. 5 rakamını yuvarlak içine almak, bu ifadedeki durumdan müşterilerin çok memnun olduklarını; 1 rakamını seçmek ise, hiç memnun olmadıklarını göstermiş olacaktır. Şimdiden zamanınızı ayırıp ankete katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Sizin cevaplarınıza göre araştırma şekil alacaktır.

Saygılarımla,

Seyda Fatih Harmandaroğlu

(1: Çok Düşük; 2: Vasatın Altında; 3: Vasat; 4: Vasatın Üstünde; 5: Çok Yüksek)

A) Personel Davranışları

- 1) Müşteriye bekletildiği için özür dilenmesi
- 2) Müşterinin sıcak karşılanıp güler yüzlü hizmet sunulması
- 3) Müşterinin ihtiyaçlarının iyi anlaşılıp doğru çözümler sunulması
- 4) Müşterinin sorularının detaylı olarak ve anlaşılır biçimde cevaplandırılması
- 5) Müşteri ile ilgili işlemlerin hızlı ve hatasız bir şekilde sonuçlandırılması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

B) Müşteri Hizmetleri

- 6) Müşterinin yetkililere ulaşabilmesi
- 7) Yetkililerin bilgi ve tecrübe seviyesi
- 8) Müşterinin şikâyetinin cevaplanması
- 9) Müşterinin şikâyetine pratik çözümler bulabilmesi
- 10) Sunulan çözümlerin yeterliliği
- 11) Satış sonrası beklentilerin karşılanması
- 12) Satış sonrası bilgi aktarımı

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

C) Fiziki Koşullar

- 13) Şube girişindeki yönlendirme
- 14) Şube yerleşiminin ferahlığı
- 15) Yeterli bekleme yerinin varlığı
- 16) Çay & kahve ikramı
- 17) Şubede hizmet alma için bekletilme süresi
- 18) Şubenin fiziki koşulları hakkında genel değerlendirme

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

D) Ürün

- 19) Ürün kalitesi
- 20) Ürün çeşitlerinin zenginliği
- 21) Yeni ürün geliştirme performansı
- 22) Taşıtlarla ilgili kullanım bilgilerinin yeterliliği
- 23) Beklentilerin karşılanması

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

E) Genel

- 24) Fiyat kalite uygunluğu
- 25) Rakip ürünlere göre, Kuralkan'ın düzeyi
- 26) Kanuni motosikletlerin piyasadaki imajı
- 27) Bir dahaki sefere Kuralkan firmasını tercih etme niyeti

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

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