## 1.1 DIMENSIONS OF PRODUCT AND SERVICE QUALITY IN TQM

Product and service quality are multi-dimensional concepts, meaning they can be assessed and evaluated across various attributes or dimensions. These dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes quality from both the perspective of the consumer and the organization delivering the product or service.

**Dimensions of Product Quality**

1. **Performance**
   o Refers to how well the product performs its intended function. This could include speed, accuracy, reliability, and efficiency.
   o Example: For a smartphone, performance might refer to how fast it operates, how well it runs applications, or how strong the signal reception is.

2. **Features**
   o The characteristics or attributes of the product that enhance its utility or appeal. It's often the "extras" beyond basic functionality.
   o Example: For a car, features might include GPS navigation, heated seats, or an advanced audio system.

3. **Reliability**
   o Refers to the consistency of the product's performance over time. A reliable product performs consistently without failure.
   o Example: A washing machine that consistently works without breakdowns over a long period.

4. **Durability**
   o The product's ability to withstand wear, pressure, or damage over time.
   o Example: A pair of hiking boots that remain intact and effective after multiple rough outings.

5. **Conformance to Specifications**
   o This dimension measures how well the product meets predetermined standards or specifications, ensuring consistency in quality.
   o Example: A batch of smartphones that all have the same screen size, camera quality, and operating system version.

6. **Aesthetics**
   o The sensory characteristics of the product that influence its appeal, such as design, style, color, and overall look and feel.

o Example: A designer watch with a sleek, modern look that appeals to fashion-conscious consumers.

7. **Serviceability**

o The ease with which a product can be repaired, maintained, or upgraded.

o Example: A laptop with a removable battery that is easy to replace when it deteriorates.

8. **Perceived Quality**

o This dimension relates to how customers perceive the overall quality of the product, which may be influenced by branding, reputation, and past experiences.

o Example: Apple products are often perceived as higher quality due to their brand image and consistent consumer experiences.

**Dimensions of Service Quality**

1. **Tangibles**

o Refers to the physical evidence of the service, such as the appearance of the facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

o Example: In a restaurant, the cleanliness of the restaurant, the uniforms of staff, and the presentation of food.

2. **Reliability**

o The ability to consistently perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It's the cornerstone of service quality.

o Example: An airline that consistently departs and arrives on time.

3. **Responsiveness**

o The willingness and ability of service personnel to help customers promptly and address their needs.

o Example: A hotel receptionist who quickly provides extra towels when requested.

4. **Assurance**

o The service provider's ability to inspire confidence and trust. It encompasses the competence, courtesy, and professionalism of staff.

o Example: A doctor who is knowledgeable, reassuring, and communicates effectively with patients.

5. **Empathy**

o The service provider's ability to understand and care for the individual needs of customers, offering personalized attention.

o Example: A customer service representative who listens attentively to a complaint and offers a solution that suits the specific circumstances.

6. **Access**
   - The ease with which customers can contact or approach the service provider, which may include location, availability of communication channels, and convenience.
   - Example: An online retail company with a user-friendly website and a 24/7 customer support hotline.

7. **Communication**
   - The clarity and effectiveness of communication with the customer, including how well the service provider explains the service, offers updates, or addresses concerns.
   - Example: A telecom provider sending clear and timely notifications about network outages or plan changes.

8. **Consistency**
   - The ability to provide the same level of service quality over time, ensuring that each customer has a similar experience.
   - Example: A fast-food chain that delivers the same quality of food and service regardless of the location or time of day.

## SUMMARY COMPARISON

| Dimension | Product Quality | Service Quality |
|---|---|---|
| **Performance** | How well the product works | Not directly applicable (services are process-oriented) |
| **Features** | Additional functionalities | Not typically applicable |
| **Reliability** | Consistency of performance | Ability to consistently deliver promised services |
| **Durability** | How long the product lasts | Not directly applicable (except in recurring services) |
| **Conformance to Specifications** | Meets specific design or manufacturing standards | Consistency in service delivery |
| **Aesthetics** | Product design and appearance | Appearance of service delivery (staff, environment) |
| **Serviceability** | Ease of repair or upgrade | Responsiveness to service issues or complaints |
| **Perceived Quality** | Consumer perception of overall quality | Reputation and brand image of service provider |

| Dimension | Product Quality | Service Quality |
|---|---|---|
| **Tangibles** | Not applicable | Physical evidence of service delivery (e.g., cleanliness) |
| **Responsiveness** | Not typically applicable | Willingness to help and address customer concerns |
| **Assurance** | Not directly applicable | Knowledge, competence, and trust of service personnel |
| **Empathy** | Not directly applicable | Personalized attention and understanding of customer needs |
| **Access** | Not applicable | Ease of access to the service provider |
| **Communication** | Not applicable | Clarity and transparency in communication with customers |
| **Consistency** | Not applicable | Providing the same quality of service across interactions |

Understanding both product and service quality across these dimensions can help businesses assess and improve their offerings, ensuring they meet or exceed customer expectations.