

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

- Refers to how well the product performs its intended function. This could include speed, accuracy, reliability, and efficiency.
- 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

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

3. Reliability

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

4. Durability

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

5. Conformance to Specifications

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

6. Aesthetics

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

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

7. Serviceability

- The ease with which a product can be repaired, maintained, or upgraded.
- Example: A laptop with a removable battery that is easy to replace when it deteriorates.

8. Perceived Quality

- This dimension relates to how customers perceive the overall quality of the product, which may be influenced by branding, reputation, and past experiences.
- Example: Apple products are often perceived as higher quality due to their brand image and consistent consumer experiences.

Dimensions of Service Quality

1. Tangibles

- Refers to the physical evidence of the service, such as the appearance of the facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
- Example: In a restaurant, the cleanliness of the restaurant, the uniforms of staff, and the presentation of food.

2. Reliability

- The ability to consistently perform the promised service dependably and accurately. It's the cornerstone of service quality.
- Example: An airline that consistently departs and arrives on time.

3. Responsiveness

- The willingness and ability of service personnel to help customers promptly and address their needs.
- Example: A hotel receptionist who quickly provides extra towels when requested.

4. Assurance

- The service provider's ability to inspire confidence and trust. It encompasses the competence, courtesy, and professionalism of staff.
- Example: A doctor who is knowledgeable, reassuring, and communicates effectively with patients.

5. Empathy

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

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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.