Customer Perception of B2B Service Quality and Its Relationship to Company Image: The Case of a Global High Technology Solutions Company

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CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF B2B SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO COMPANY IMAGE: THE CASE OF A GLOBAL HIGH TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS COMPANY

In the context of high technology solutions the understanding of clients perception of service quality becomes complex within the relationship marketing structure. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived service quality of a leading high technology corporation in B2B Services and identify the impact of functional quality and technical quality in influencing the company image of service provider. Perception of service was appraised by means of Gronroos Model and correlation analysis was carried out to derive meaningful insights. The mean scores computed showed that similar ratings were given for the variables reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness and telephonic medium of customer service was preferred over website in technical quality dimension. For extracting better results the values of correlation coefficients was classified as weak and very weak values. It was found that reliability, assurance and responsiveness dimension were associated with excellent service of company while the variables of tangibility along with assurance dimension was related with superior technology as well as ethical values of the company. Interestingly there was no significant expectation of empathy even for a familiar and reputed company. Both functional quality and technical quality are equally important in creating positive perception for excellent service and sincerity of the company. These managerial implications would help to gauge the current service quality levels and bring out more improvements in service performance.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of an augmented product has made the differentiation of goods and service difficult to a large extent. This has made the measurement of service quality complex and also the quality initiatives generated may not be applicable for both low end and high end industries. Moreover most of the practices have been created in the context of B2C market thereby creating lacunae in the understanding of services in B2B market. Although efforts have been made for comprehending the B2B market, it is a challenge in addressing the service quality aspects in premium (high end) B2B segment where relationship and service quality need not be positively correlated or the linkages if any are not adequately acknowledged.

It is obvious that service quality is a significant issue in B2B marketing since good services retain the customer and poor services lead to detections. In B2B market, main motive of the company is maintaining long term relationship with customers. However, it is easy to pronounce that B2B has more on relationship marketing. Through this paper an attempt is made to identify better measures for evaluating service quality among high end B2B customers and identify areas of improvement in providing service for high end goods. Apart from redesigning a standard service quality measuring instrument, a quantitative analysis is

carried out to measure service quality based on data collected from B2B consumers of a premium company namely GlobalTechInc*. This global company, designs and develops solutions in a high technology industry for a variety of selected professional markets: medical imaging, media & entertainment, infrastructure & utilities, traffic & transportation, defense & security, education & training and corporate AV. In these markets GlobalTechInc offers user-friendly products that optimize productivity and business efficiency. Its innovative hardware and software solutions integrate all aspects of the solution chain. The client list for the company includes fortune 500 companies requiring high end solutions. GlobalTechInc has its own facilities for Sales & Marketing, Customer Support, R&D and Manufacturing in Europe, America and Asia-Pacific. The company is active in more than 90 countries and employs 3,300 staff worldwide.

Competition has increased the benchmarks for pre and post service quality. Service quality results in customer retention, positive word of mouth, increased market share and finally increased profits (Devlin and Dong 1994). For service-based economies, growth is accomplished by increasing competition and technology advances, thus reinforcing service quality as an important and sustaining competitive advantage (Bhardwaj, Varadarajan and Fahy 1993). SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988) and SERVPERF (Cronin and Taylor 1992) are the two popular scales that have been employed to measure service quality in a multitude of industries. Five functional service quality dimensions are tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. Tangibility dimension is the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, information material and personnel used in services. Reliability is the ability to perform the service accurately and dependably. Responsiveness is the willingness to help customers and provide a prompt service. Assurance includes several aspects such as competence, courtesy, credibility and security. Empathy has several traits including the physical and social contact and making the customer understand about the services through proper communication (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1988).

SERVPERF model has different approach than SERVQUAL model. SERVPERF model examines the relationships between service quality, consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions. SERVPERF model indicates that service quality contributes to performance. Hence, it's necessary for service organization to monitor the performance frequently. Many researchers have defined service quality in different ways. Cronin and Taylor (1994) propose that service quality as a form of attitude representing a long run overall evaluation. Parasurman et. al (1985) believe service quality to be a function of the differences between

*The original name of the company has been replaced with Global TechInc for confidentiality

expectation and performance along the quality dimensions. The quality of service includes both the technical and functional quality which are the key ingredient in the success of service organizations (Gronroos 1984). Technical service quality in high technology solutions industry is defined primarily on the basis of placing a service call. Functional service quality relates to the manner of delivery of after-sales services by the high technology solutions company.

Research has indicated that the study of service quality in B2B segments is very limited. The measurement of service quality in the B2B markets gets complicated due to the relationships among the Service Company and buyers or suppliers. Investigation has indicated that service quality studies in B2B marketplace can generate thoughts for end user services, but that executive must recognize the need to modify the institutional traditions in rotation with the organizational expansion (Mehta and Durvasula 1998). Research has indicated that many studies were conducted in service quality but there was dearth specifically in B2B context. Hence, the current research is specifically designed to apply the Gronroos' model to measure service quality of B2B markets.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

> to analyze the perceived service quality of leading high technology corporation in B2B Services.

> to identify the relationship of functional quality and technical quality of B2B services in influencing the overall image of the company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service quality has been frequently studied in the services marketing and much of the literature has focused on measuring service quality using SERVQUAL instrument (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985; 1988). However, it has been seen that SERVQUAL concentrates on functional quality only and becomes a drawback for using the model. Gronroos (1982) identified two service quality dimensions (Figure1) the technical aspect (what service is provided) and the functional aspect (how the service is provided).

Anderson et al. (1994) found that service quality is depending on the gap between anticipated and perceived performance. Services are normally experienced processes and it creates an interaction environment for customer and service provider. Buyer-seller service encounter

4

have a great impact on the perceived service. Quality of a service has two dimensions: technical-quality related dimension and functional-process related dimension. Customer interaction with the company and the delivery of message in terms of services by service provider is important for quality evaluation. Technical quality is what the customer is left with after the service production process and its buyer-seller interactions are over. However, the customers will be influenced by the way end result of the process-is transferred to him.

Gronroos also emphasized the importance of corporate image in the experience of service quality. Customers bring their earlier experiences and overall perceptions of a service firm to each encounter because customers often have continuous contacts with the same service firm (Gronroo 2001). So image concept played a vital role in the perceived service quality. Perceived quality is vital since it associated with happiness and customer delight influences the company's performance. Kane et al. (1997) identified that perceived service quality is linked with the customer gladness. Grönroos (1988) indicated in Perceived Quality Model that perceived quality is a function of expected quality and experienced quality. According to Grönroos image is a filter which influences the perception of the operation of the company. Expected quality is generated from market communication, image, word-of-mouth, and customer needs and experienced quality is generated from technical quality and functional quality.

Services purchased from organizations (B2B) are provided by qualified professionals whose expertise and skills are the key elements of the quality of the service provided (Yorke 1990). In addition to examining the technical aspects of service deliverables, buyers in B2B services often consider the execution of service delivery transactions in their valuations of service quality. This functional quality dimension is measured by service provider accessibility or the degree of customer service surrounding the deliverable. The difference between expected quality and the experienced quality is the determinant of total perceived quality. Grönroos (2000) has indicated that superior perceived quality is obtained when the experienced quality meets the expectations of the customer. The concept of total perceived quality is demonstrated in Figure 2.

Expectations, in the service quality literature, are not viewed as normative expectations (Miller 1977; Swan & Trawick 1980; Prakash 1984) or what the customer believes should be offered, but rather are seen as what the customer believes would be offered in a high technology solution's after-sales service offering. There is growing evidence to suggest that perceived quality is the single most important variable influencing consumers' perceptions of

value and affects their intention to purchase products or services (Bolton and Drew 1988). This intention to purchase and repurchase products or services is termed as customer loyalty.

Several studies have identified potential difficulties with the use of SERVQUAL (Carman 1990; Cronin and Taylor 1992). These difficulties have related to the use of so-called 'difference scores', the ambiguity of the definition of consumer expectations, the stability of the SERVQUAL scale over time and dimensionality of the instrument. As a result of these criticisms, questions have been raised regarding the use of SERVQUAL as a generic measure of service quality and alternative industry-specific measures of service quality should be developed for specific service settings. The applicability of a generic scale for measuring service quality in all settings has been questioned (Babakus and Boller 1992). Moreover, it has been argued that a simple adaptation of the SERVQUAL items is insufficient to measure service quality across a diversity of service industries (Carman 1990, Babakus and Boller 1992).

Carman (1990) argued that certain dimensions required expansion by the inclusion of 13 additional items to the SERVQUAL instrument in order to capture service quality adequately across different services. It has also been argued that service quality is a simple unidimensional construct in some contexts, but a complex multidimensional construct in others (Babakus and Boller 1992). As a result, it has suggested that industry-specific measures of service quality might be more appropriate than a single generic scale (Babakus and Boller 1992)

In general SERVQUAL model is used as service quality instrument but it has major focus on only functional quality of services. However, service quality dimensions can be broadly categorized into two parts: Technical and Functional Quality. Functional quality of the services includes reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy and responsiveness components.

B2B services are more specialized and technology oriented as compared to B2C markets. Hence, the perceived service quality in B2B and B2C are not same and preference and views in B2B market are different. Moreover, major difference in B2B and B2C lies in the mindset and culture of buyers. Usually B2B buyers include only corporate, industrial buyers having million amount of purchasing capacity but in B2C market include the buyers having day to day purchasing capacity (eGain Communications Corporation).

Consumers buying decision constructs with several steps such as information search, evaluation criteria, alternatives, influence on buying, pre-sales service and post sales service.

The process is same yet the conditions are different in B2B and B2C market. People are majorly looking into the long term relationship in B2B market because of their high investment. As compared to B2C market B2B have high number of professionals involved in product and services dealings. However, individual buyers in B2C markets are not concerned about the qualification or background of the professionals but B2B looks into the skills and expertise of the service provider. B2B market have also customized requirement of their product and service but for an individual customer it's not the priority.

Literature research has also indicated that B2B markets have limited number of buyers to share their experience, understanding and familiarity due to the complexity of the services. However, marketing communications is another way to shape the service quality perceptions (Green 1998).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used for the study was a mixture of exploratory and descriptive research method. The research is aim to measure the perceived service quality in B2B services. Perceived service quality in B2B context has been included in the present research. The models of perceived service quality helped in identifying the features and the related elements for construction of data collection tool. The tool for data collection (questionnaire) for the primary survey was largely based on the Grönroos Model, after deriving from a modified SERVPERF scale, first proposed by Cronin & Taylor 1992. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were checked and the respective additions and omissions were carried out. The primary data on perceived service quality of B2B services was collected through two ways, web-based Questionnaire and telephonic interview with the structured questionnaire. Total 163 respondents were chosen based on convenience sampling from the customer list of a leading Global High Technology Solutions who forms the B2B clientele for one of the companies' largest division.

All questions administered in the web-based questionnaire were randomized every time a customer took the survey. In circumstances where the customers did not have access to the web-based questionnaires, their responses were recorded on telephone and entered into the survey. SPSS v17.0 was used as main statistical tool for the analysis.

TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tool of data collection which also was an outcome of the research was a comprehensive questionnaire based on the Grönroos Model. The questionnaire was constructed to measure the perceived service quality with respect to B2B services.

Five dimensions were used to collect data for the functional service quality, namely, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness, as per SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1988) and SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor 1992). Responses for each of the five dimensions (Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness) were collected using a 7 point agreement Likert scale where 1 meant "Strongly Disagree" and 7 meant "Strongly Agree".

Twenty four variables were used to measure the Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness dimensions. Technical service quality dimension was also measured, using four variables, by a seven point agreement Likert Scale. A similar seven point agreement Likert Scale was also used to measure the importance of 11 attributes for Company Image.

Reliability and validity of measurement scales of the questionnaire was checked after the collection of data. Reliability refers to the property of a measurement instrument that causes it to give similar results for similar inputs. Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach 1951) is a measure of reliability. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the individual dimensions of the Service Quality ranged from 0.759 to 0.949 (Table 1). None of the reliability alphas was below the cut-off point of 0.70, which is generally considered to be the criterion for demonstrating internal consistency of a scale (Nunnally 1978).

Churchill Jr. (1987) indicates that validity is an important psychometric propriety in evaluating scales fitness towards measuring abstract constructs. Therefore, three types of validity were used to measure the service quality scale. Service quality constructs were determined from the existing literature and their selection can be defended on face value. Content Validity can easily ensured because the service quality measurement instrument was adapted from the SERVQUAL and Grönroos models which have been widely, used among researchers. Moreover, to establish construct validity evidence must be first provided that the data supports the theoretical structure. Thus, for further analysis in this paper, the original dimensions on the SERVPERF instrument and the Grönroos instrument are used as the apriori dimensions.

SERVICE QUALITY SCORES

After establishing reliability and validity, the service quality scores resulting from the survey were analyzed. The Service Quality scores for the company in Functional Service Quality such as Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy, Responsiveness and Technical Service Quality as well as Company Image are given in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 respectively. Each score is out of a maximum of 7 and the Service Quality variables under each dimension are sorted in descending order of mean scores. It provides an overview of the mean scores and standard deviations for the measures of perceptions according to the Service Quality scale. The scale questions are grouped by their dimensions, namely, Reliability, Assurance, Tangibility, Empathy and Responsiveness (defining the Functional Quality), the Technical Service Quality and the Company Image.

Reliability has a mean score of 5.72 (Table 1) which is the lowest among all the dimensions making up the Functional Service Quality. But the score of Reliability is fairly good in spite of being the lowest among all dimensions. The aspect 'Services are performed as promised' has the highest score of 5.86 (Table 2) in reliability which signals that company keeps its promises made to the Customers and 'Services are performed first-time-right' as has the lowest score of 5.20 (Table 2) in reliability. This can be done by launching a company-wide initiative to emphasize the need to keep quality in the top priorities in all deliverables.

Assurance has a mean score of 5.80 (Table 1). In fact this score is the highest after Tangibility, among all the dimensions making up the Functional Service Quality. Almost all the aspects of assurance are quite closely ranked by the Customers; the highest being the fact that company's service employees instill confidence in Customers about the decision to use their solutions, at 5.87 (Table 2).

Tangibility has a mean score of 5.91 (Table 1) which is the highest among all the dimensions. This is an indicator of a good perception in the minds of the Customers about the tangibles involved in the service process. Noticeably high is the score for the variable: 'On-site employees of company have a professional appearance' at 6.02 (Table 2). But equally noteworthy is the lowest score of 5.75 (Table 2) for the variable: 'Off-site employees of company have a courteous tone'. This aspect of the services can be improved with relative ease for the company by properly training their off-site service employees.

Empathy has a mean score of 5.78 (Table 1) which is, again, a positive result for company. However, the variable: 'Business hours of company for service delivery are convenient' has a

lowest mean score of 5.60 (Table 2). Since company competes in the market with Augmented Products, it becomes important to maintain convenient service delivery hours for Customers. Further, Kotler (1969) noted that much competition takes place at the Augmented Product level rather than at the Core Benefit level or, as Levitt (1969) put it: 'New competition is not between what companies produce in their factories, but between what they add to their factory output in the form of packaging, services, advertising, customer advice, financing, delivery arrangements, warehousing, and other things that people value'. A lower score of 5.68 on understanding the service need of customers needs to be dealt with priority, because if the need is incorrectly assessed, no matter how much effort (in time and monetary terms) goes into the Service Process, it will always miss the necessary target. (Table 2)

Responsiveness has a mean score of 5.79 (Table 1). It shows that Customers are fairly happy with the response times exhibited by company when service requests come in. All the four variables under the responsiveness variable are fairly well scored by Customers. Company should maintain this in the future. The overall Functional Service Quality has a mean score of 5.79 (Table 1) which is, again, a fairly positive result for the SERVPERF-M instrument used.

The Technical Service Quality scores have a mean score of 5.72 (Table 1). Although fairly positive, being a high technology company, it is imperative for company to be perceived as highly proficient in maintaining their technical service quality. Out of the four variables making up the Technical Service Quality, the variable: 'Customers can register a service request on company website with adequate ease' has the lowest mean score of 5.65 (Table 3). In today's competitive market where companies are finding newer and more innovative channels for Customers to reach them, it is a minimum expectation from company to have a customer-friendly and effective support website.

The Company Image has a mean score of 5.72 (Table 1). Although fairly positive, being a niche market player and in the B2B market, it is important for company to improve on this parameter. Noteworthy among all aspects of this variable, are the variables: 'company makes valuable contribution to the society' and 'company provides excellent service to its customers', which have the lowest mean scores of 4.34 and 5.07, respectively (Table 4). Prima facie, it is suggested that company improves these aspects to increase their perceived Company Image.

RELATIONSHIP OF FUNCTIONAL QUALITY AND TECHNICAL QUALITY WITH COMPANY IMAGE

In order to determine the relationship of functional quality and technical quality with company image bivariate correlation analysis was carried out. As the mean scores of functional quality, technical quality and company image was very high it was evident that the customers had rated high on most of the variables for the respective dimensions. Due to the lower variations among the scores thus computed, the correlations coefficients also showed weak relationships. (Values less than 0.5) In the present analysis the significant correlations were divided as weak (0.26-0.50) and very weak (0-0.25) for differentiating the service quality of high end B2B solutions. It is assumed that in the context of this high end industry relationships the customers would be obviously giving higher ratings on all the positive dimensions under the study. Hence meaningful implications can be arrived only by extracting the minor but significant differences perceived by the customers.

All the variables of reliability dimension had a weak positive correlation with excellent service of company. The perception of the provider as a successful sincere company with superior technology ethical values also showed a fairly weak positive correlation. Interestingly services provided at the committed time didn't have any significant relationship with the variables of company image. (Refer Table 5)

Similar to the Reliability dimension all the four variables of assurance dimension had weak positive correlation with excellent service, being a successful company, superior technology and the ethical aspect of the company. Apart from this, safety in transaction of assurance dimension showed weak positive correlation with most of the variables of company image. (Refer Table 6)

All the five variables of tangibility dimension had weak positive correlation only with superior technology and ethical aspect of the company (refer Table 7). The empathy dimension did not show any significant relationship with the perception about providing valuable contribution to the society while it showed a weak correlation with excellent service and sincerity aspect of the company. Individual attention provided with the customer's best interest by means of company employees caring nature had fairly weak positive correlation with the company image. Surprisingly reputation, familiarity and global recognized company image had very weak correlation with the empathy dimension. (Refer Table 8)

All the variables of responsiveness had weak positive correlation with the reliability; excellent service and sincerity dimension perceived about the company (refer Table 9).

The four variables covering technical quality had weak positive correlation with sincerity and reliability aspect of the company. The website component of the technical quality had no significant relationship with the variables of company image. On the other hand the telephonic use on customer service of the company has weak correlation with variables of company image. (Refer Table 10)

From the correlation analysis it is found that both the functional quality and technical quality dimensions had weak positive correlation with excellent service and sincerity of the company. Most of the variables of functional quality dimension primarily had weak positive correlation with excellent service, successful company, superior technology, sincerity and ethical aspect of company. More or less there is no correlation between the company image about valuable contributions made to the society with the functional and technical quality dimensions. (Refer Table 5, Table 6, Table 7, Table 8, Table 9 and Table 10)

CONCLUSION

The study attempted to assess the perceived service quality of a high end solution company in B2B services and identifying the factors contributing to company image. The framework of the study was based on the conventional service quality models popular in the industry. All the mean scores covering functional quality, technical quality and company image were rated high by customers. Hence differentiating the relationship of variables in respective dimensions was a complex exercise. It was found that variable 'professional appearance of on-site employees' of tangibility dimension had the highest rating among all variables across dimensions. However, respondents had given similar ratings for the variables reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness. The telephonic medium of customer service was preferred over website in technical quality dimension. Moreover the customers had a very high positive company image across all variables.

Bivariate correlation was used to evaluate relationship among the functional and technical quality with company image. Since the values of correlation coefficients were low the relationship was further classified as weak and very weak values for extracting better results. As far as functional quality is concerned all the variables of reliability, assurance and responsiveness dimension were associated with excellent service of company while the variables of tangibility along with assurance dimension was related with superior technology as well as ethical values of the company. Contrary to expectation, there was no significant expectation of empathy even for a familiar and reputed company. Both functional quality and

technical quality was equally associated with the perception of excellent service and sincerity of the company.

In the context of B2B service providing high end technology solution industry, the assessment of accurate quality of service by means of customer perception is difficult. Recognition of company for excellent service can be achieved by providing better reliability, assurance and responsiveness to customers. The tangibility and assurance dimension of functional quality collectively has to be strengthened for enhancing the customer's perception about the company as having superior technology and ethical values. Improvement of technical quality will help in perception of company for its sincerity and reliability.
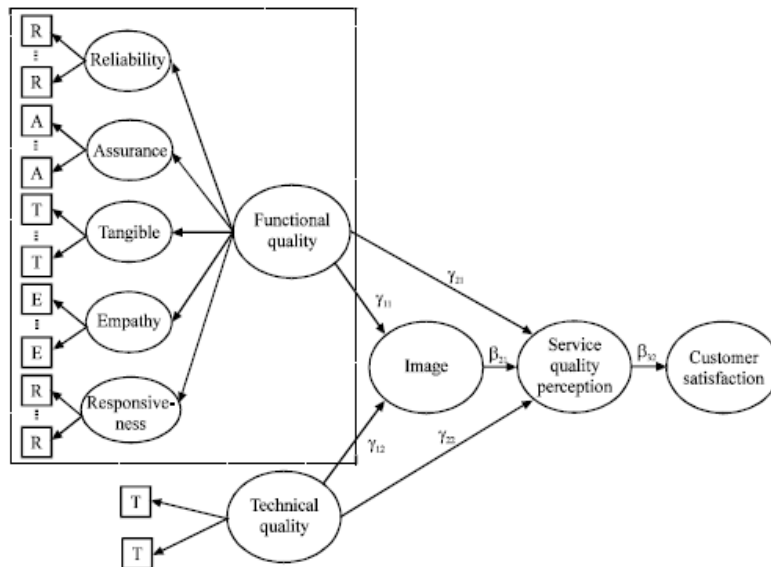
Figure1: Gronroos Hierarchical Model of Service Quality

(Source: Grönroos, C. (1984), "A service quality model and its marketing implication", *European Journal of Marketing*, 18 (4), 36-44 and Grönroos, C. (1988), "Service quality: the six criteria of good perceived service quality", *Review of Business*, 9(winter), 10-13.)
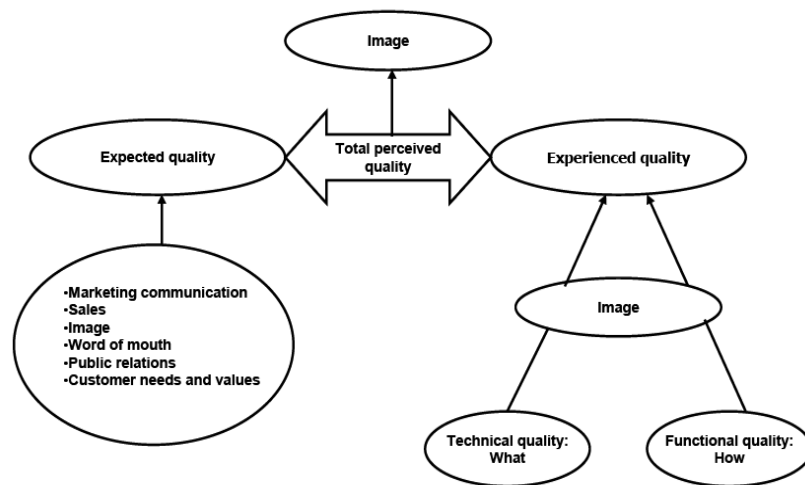
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Figure 2: Total perceived quality (Grönroos 2000)

(Source: Grönroos, C. (2000), *Service Management and Marketing, a customer relationship management approach*. United States of America: Wiley & Sons, Ltd.)

Table 1: Reliability Scores

Variable	Variable Mean	Cronbach's Alpha
Reliability	5.717	0.806
Assurance	5.798	0.855
Tangibility	5.906	0.759
Empathy	5.779	0.810
Responsiveness	5.789	0.766
Functional Service Quality	5.790	0.949
Technical Service Quality	5.716	0.840
Company Image	5.718	0.851

Table 2: Mean Scores for functional quality

Dimension	Service Quality Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Reliability	The services are performed as promised	5.86	0.47
	Employees are consistently courteous to us	5.85	0.594
	There is dependability in the service performed	5.85	0.558
	The services are provided correctly	5.82	0.569
	The services are provided at the committed time	5.72	0.66
	The services are performed "first-time-right"	5.2	0.695
Assurance	Service employees instill confidence in us about our decision to use their solutions	5.87	0.535
	Employees are courteous to us	5.79	0.698
	Employs knowledgeable employees to answer our questions	5.78	0.639
	We feel safe in our transaction with company	5.75	0.67
Tangibility	On-site employees have a professional appearance	6.02	0.623
	Off-site employees have a professional tone	5.89	0.521
	On-site employees have a neat appearance	5.88	0.514
	We are provided with adequate materials related to the service	5.83	0.475
	Off-site employees have a courteous tone	5.75	0.602
Empathy	We are given adequate individual attention during a service call	5.85	0.614
	Upholds our best interest during service delivery	5.84	0.496

	Service employees deal with us caringly	5.78	0.648
	Service employees understand our service needs well	5.68	0.709
	Business hours for service delivery are convenient for us	5.6	0.782
Responsiveness	We are informed about when the services will be performed	5.85	0.524
	We experience a prompt service after registering a service request	5.85	0.424
	We could sense a strong willingness to help us	5.82	0.587
	We could sense a strong readiness to respond to our request	5.82	0.566

Table 3: Scores for Technical Service Quality

Dimension	Service Quality Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Technical Service Quality	We are able to reach companies customer support helpline (on phone) with adequate ease	5.76	.627
	We can register a service request on phone with adequate ease	5.74	.646
	We are able to reach companies customer support website with adequate ease	5.72	.733
	We can register a service request on companies website with adequate ease	5.65	.857

Table 4: Scores for Company Image

Dimension	Service Quality Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.
Company Image	A global multinational company	6.01	.608
	A reputed company	6.01	.533
	Company name is familiar in its industry	5.99	.648
	Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	5.96	.607
	A successful company	5.96	.602
	Honest in its dealings	5.93	.499
	Ethical in its actions	5.90	.590
	Sincere to its customers	5.87	.610
	A reliable company	5.85	.641
	Provides excellent service to its customers	5.07	.695
	Makes valuable contribution to the society	4.34	.911

Table 5: Correlation between Company Image and Reliability Dimension

Company Image and Reliability Dimension	The services are performed as promised	There is dependability in the service performed	The services are provided correctly	The services are performed "first-time-right"	The services are provided at the committed time	Employees are consistently courteous to us
A reliable company	.382**	.422**	.484**	.234**	.327**	.541**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.351**	.392**	.406**	.406**	.337**	.414**
A successful company	.306**	.330**	.211**	.345**	.250**	.430**
Makes valuable contribution to the society	.069	.183*	.192*	.389**	.033	.130
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.285**	.366**	.355**	.164*	.236**	.309**
Sincere to its customers	.324**	.433**	.376**	.222**	.340**	.405**
A reputed company	.254**	.172*	.231**	.210**	.150	.240**
A global multinational company	.136	.260**	.131	.242**	.162*	.244**
Company name is familiar in its industry	.015	.149	.245**	.033	-.037	.188*
Honest in its dealings	.196*	.252**	.174*	.147	.149	.319**
Ethical in its actions	.239**	.406**	.332**	.229**	.294**	.327**

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 6: Correlation between Company Image and Assurance Dimension

Company Image and Assurance Dimension	Service employees instill confidence in us about our decision to use their solutions	We feel safe in our transaction with company	Employees are courteous to us	Employs knowledgeable employees to answer our questions
A reliable company	.508**	.455**	.510**	.413**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.389**	.325**	.454**	.396**
A successful company	.299**	.331**	.343**	.457**
Makes valuable contribution to the society	.073	.054	.216**	.183*
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.407**	.360**	.362**	.319**
Sincere to its customers	.352**	.396**	.365**	.440**
A reputed company	.130	.278**	.163*	.249**
A global multinational company	.135	.276**	.202**	.394**
Company name is familiar in its industry	.074	.184*	.181*	.197*
Honest in its dealings	.109	.223**	.210**	.209**
Ethical in its actions	.316**	.458**	.206**	.326**

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 7: Correlation between Company Image and Tangibility Dimension

Company Image and Tangibility Dimension	We are provided with adequate materials related to the service	On-site employees have a professional appearance	On-site employees have a neat appearance	Off-site employees have a professional tone	Off-site employees have a courteous tone
A reliable company	.239**	.376**	.371**	.603**	.524**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.209**	.299**	.307**	.347**	.439**
A successful company	.186*	.313**	.312**	.380**	.340**
Makes valuable contribution to the society	.181*	.040	.087	.124	.165*
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.268**	.274**	.337**	.310**	.358**
Sincere to its customers	.202**	.327**	.305**	.349**	.380**
A reputed company	.071	.161*	.145	.244**	.294**
A global multinational company	.088	.238**	.246**	.196*	.240**
Company name is familiar in its industry	.051	.213**	.218**	.189*	.247**
Honest in its dealings	.073	.198*	.213**	.254**	.242**
Ethical in its actions	.262**	.312**	.334**	.412**	.299**

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8: Correlation between Company Image and Empathy Dimension

Company Image and Empathy Dimension	We are given adequate individual attention during a service call	Service employees deal with us caringly	Upholds our best interest during service delivery	Service employees understand our service needs well	Business hours for service delivery are convenient for us
A reliable company	.352**	.507**	.605**	.256**	.317**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.292**	.472**	.472**	.318**	.232**
A successful company	.362**	.366**	.387**	.349**	.141
Makes valuable contribution to the society	-.013	.049	.117	.024	.043
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.211**	.398**	.465**	.267**	.216**
Sincere to its customers	.399**	.441**	.458**	.401**	.204**
A reputed company	.202**	.213**	.294**	.218**	.076
A global multinational company	.261**	.203**	.336**	.170*	-.005
Company name is familiar in its industry	.119	.212**	.258**	.205**	.032
Honest in its dealings	.190*	.268**	.355**	.206**	.166*
Ethical in its actions	.399**	.367**	.540**	.157*	.190*

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 9: Correlation between Company Image and Responsiveness Dimension

Company Image and Responsiveness Dimension	We are informed about when the services will be performed	We experience a prompt service after registering a service request	We could sense a strong willingness to help us	We could sense a strong readiness to respond to our request
A reliable company	.467**	.474**	.469**	.403**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.323**	.368**	.296**	.256**
A successful company	.328**	.203**	.302**	.345**
Makes valuable contribution to the society	.128	.120	.014	.002
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.270**	.341**	.273**	.218**
Sincere to its customers	.384**	.373**	.342**	.449**
A reputed company	.244**	.199*	.090	.135
A global multinational company	.290**	.083	.137	.293**
Company name is familiar in its industry	.138	.277**	.035	.083
Honest in its dealings	.315**	.115	.225**	.224**
Ethical in its actions	.331**	.249**	.385**	.434**

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 10: Correlation between Company Image and Technical Quality

Company Image and Technical Quality	We are able to reach company's customer support helpline (on phone) with adequate ease	We are able to reach company's customer support website with adequate ease	We can register a service request on phone with adequate ease	We can register a service request on company's website with adequate ease
A reliable company	.296**	.279**	.487**	.265**
Provides excellent service to its customers	.278**	.098	.397**	.102
A successful company	.398**	.140	.352**	.114
Makes valuable contribution to the society	.099	.005	.100	-.022
Possesses superior technology in visualization solutions	.333**	.143	.400**	.141
Sincere to its customers	.355**	.291**	.399**	.256**
A reputed company	.157*	-.039	.225**	.009
A global multinational company	.218**	.022	.291**	.044
Company name is familiar in its industry	.130	.032	.213**	.059
Honest in its dealings	.086	.083	.270**	.089
Ethical in its actions	.286**	.192*	.320**	.237**

N=163

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

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| Title:

CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF B2B SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO COMPANY IMAGE: THE CASE OF A GLOBAL HIGH TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS COMPANY ||

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Abstract:

In the context of high technology solutions the understanding of clients perception of service quality becomes complex within the relationship marketing structure. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived service quality of a leading high technology corporation in B2B Services and identify the impact of functional quality and technical quality in influencing the company image of service provider. Perception of service was appraised by means of Gronroos Model and correlation analysis was carried out to derive meaningful insights. The mean scores computed showed that similar ratings were given for the variables reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness and telephonic medium of customer service was preferred over website in technical quality dimension. For extracting better results the values of correlation coefficients was classified as weak and very weak values. It was found that reliability, assurance and responsiveness dimension were associated with excellent service of company while the variables of tangibility along with assurance dimension was related with superior technology as well as ethical values of the company. Interestingly there was no significant expectation of empathy even for a familiar and reputed company. Both functional quality and technical quality are equally important in creating positive perception for excellent service and sincerity of the company. These managerial implications would help to gauge the current service quality levels and bring out more improvements in service performance

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