

Service quality: A comparative study between State Bank of India and ICICI Bank

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ABSTRACT

Service quality has become an important tool in the service industry. The concept of customer satisfaction is widely recognised as a key differentiator which occupies a vital position in marketing thought and practice and is the major outcome of any marketing activity. This study makes an effort to understand the difference in service quality offered by state bank of India and ICICI bank. SERVQUAL model which was proposed by Parasuram et al. is used to measure the service quality perceived by the customers of the state bank of India and ICICI bank in Srinagar city, a city in Jammu and Kashmir and a state in India. The information as gathered from the different customers of the both banks Viz., State bank of India and ICICI bank Forty respondents from each bank were contacted personally in order to seek fair and frank responses on quality of services in banks. The analysis clearly shows that there exists wide perceptual difference among state bank of India regarding overall service quality with their respective customers, when compared to ICICI bank whereas the said perceptual difference in ICICI bank is narrow.

1. Introduction

Banks play an important and active role in the financial and economic development of a country. An efficient banking system really influences the growth of a country in different sectors of the economy. Practitioners in the banking industry face a large number of intricate challenges in the global marketplace. It is essential for banks to better understand changing customer needs and adopt the latest information technology system in order to compete more effectively with global organizations(Vadde, 2016). Banks are primarily service organizations and their profitability and continued existence greatly depends upon their capacity to widen and retain their customer's base by rendering a multitude of services in a manner that meets the expectations of the customers. Cut throat competition and highly stressed profits have introduced the new marketing practices in the Indian banking sector and has also brought the customer satisfaction to the centre of the focus. It has become very essential for all the banks to retain their existing customer base as well as to enlarge the same. As the numbers of banks are increasing; customers' expectations of service quality is growing. It has become necessary to measure the service quality of the bank so that the service providers can assess their level of service quality and identify the quality gaps for improvements (Brahmbhatt & Panelia, 2008)

Service Quality

Quality is a concept which requires a concern both in products as well as services. Experts have defined it as, "fitness for use" "conformance to requirements", freedom from variations etc. In fact, Quality is considered as the most important factor that influence on the buying behaviour of the customer. In tangible goods like products, quality can be measured by its durability and number of defects, usage of product; packaging, handling etc.Measuring the quality in intangible is a different one. As services are intangible so they are very difficult to measure (G.Thangapandi & K.Gobinath,

2016). Service Quality' is a business administration term used to describe achievement in service. It reflects both objective aspects of service(G.Thangapandi subjective K.Gobinath, 2016). Service quality is an important factor affecting customer satisfaction (Rahmani-Nejad, Firoozbakht, & Taghipoor, 2014). Service quality is an approach to manage the business processes in order to ensure the full satisfaction of the customer which helps to increase the effectiveness of the firms. Now a days the customers is able to choose the bank from a number of banks which is offering the wide range of services (Patidar & Verma, 2013). It is not always possible that the expected service and the perceived service may be equal (Rathee, Deveshar, & Rajan, 2014) perceived quality of a given service is the result of an evaluation process since consumers often make comparison between the services they expect with perceptions of the services that they receive (H.M.G.Y.J.Hennayake, 2017). Nowadays, with the increased competition, service quality has become a popular area of academic investigation and has been recognized as a key factor in keeping competitive advantage and sustaining satisfying relationships with customers (Zeithmal et al...2000) (Ananth, Ramesh, & Prabaharam, 2011). Customers generally have a tendency to compare the service they 'experience' with the service they 'expect'. If the experience does not match the expectation, there arises a gap (Rathee, Deveshar, & Rajan, 2014). Service quality can thus be defined as the difference between customer expectations of service and perceived service. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence customer dissatisfaction occurs (Ananth, Ramesh, & Prabaharam, 2011). The service quality model or the "GAP model" developed by the authors- Parasuranam, Zeithmal e.tal highlights the main requirements for delivering high service quality. It identifies "gaps" that cause unsuccessful delivery of service. An important advantage of the SERQUAL instrument is that it has proven valid and reliable across a large number of service contexts.

Definition of Service Quality

Lewis and Booms (1983) had suggested that service quality results from a comparison of what customers expect from a service-provider with the provider's actual performance. According to them, "service quality is a measure of how well the service level delivered matches customer expectations. Delivering quality service means conforming to customers expectations on a consistent basis.

Five dimensions of service quality

1. Tangibility

It means the things which are physically observed by the customers in the bank branch including large ATM network, personnel, physical facilities, materials and appearance etc.

2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the trust in company's ability of performing service in a proper way, such as acting according to promises and declarations.

3. Responsiveness

It refers to service provider's willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. It can be measured by the amount of time needed to deal with customers' reported problems and the response duration once the customer filed a service request.

4. Assurance

Assurance is related to the behaviour of employees, the employee should have ability to inspire the trust and confidence. It includes safe transcation, employee should have knowledge to answer the customer's questions and consistently polite with customers.

5. Empathy

It refers to the caring, individualized attention the service provider gives to its customers. Furthermore, customers in the bank may come from different social background and hence the banker could emphasize personalized attention on customers and understand specific needs of customers based on their requirements.

In the context of the comparative efforts at positioning of State bank of India and ICICI bank in the market, this study attempts to assess the level of service quality perceptions of banking sub-sector customers and map out the differences between the service quality perceptions and expectations of customers of State bank of India and ICICI bank along with the factors responsible for these differences.

2. Literature review

(Sudesh, 2007)In their research article entitled "Service quality in banks-A study in Haryana and Chandigarh" revealed that poor service quality in public sector banks is mainly because of deficiency in tangibility, lack of responsiveness and empathy. Private sector banks, on the other hand, were found to be more reformed in this regards. Above all, the foreign banks were relatively close to the expectations of their customers with regard to various dimensions of service quality. Further, the study revealed that

there existed service quality variation across demographic variables and suggested that management of banks should pay attention to potential failure points and should be responsive to customer problems.

(Brahmbhatt & Panelia, 2008)In their study "An Assessment of Service Quality in Banks"The aim of this study is to comparatively examine and measuring of service quality and customer satisfaction among private sector, public sector and foreign bank and to offer suggestion based on results of the study. The Sample size was 246 and the Sample universe included Ahmadabad and Gandhinagar. The Sampling Technique used was stratified random. The five dimensions of SERVQUAL as proposed by Parasuranam et al. (1988), Othman and Owen (2001, 2002)(Gupta & Agarwal, 2013) were adapted and modified in this study. They conclude from the study that Foreign Banks is better than public sector banks and private sector banks.

(Fatima & Gnanadhas, 2011) in their research article "Impact of Service Quality in Commercial Banks on the Customers Satisfaction: An Empirical Study" They concluded that, Service quality is important mainly in the service business enterprises. Growth and development of the enterprise majorly depends on the service quality. As service quality is the only way to satisfy majority of customers, enterprises concentrate more on the service quality today. Quality in service is also interrelated to other behavioural outcomes of the customers.

(Rathee, Deveshar, & Rajan, 2014) in their research study entitled"To Identify Service Quality Gaps in Banking Sector: A Study of Private Banks "The aim of this study is to identify the service quality gaps in the private sector banks. For comparative purposes, five service quality dimensions are used i.e. tangibility, reliability, assurance, responsiveness and empathy. The 22 items SERVQUAL scale based on gap model proposed by Parasuranam, Zeithmal and Berry was used. A sample size of 100 was taken using quota sampling. Gap analysis was applied to find the gaps between expected and performed service in private banks of NCR using SPSS version 20 to find difference between male and female perception and expectation. The study provided an insight into which attributes of service quality in private bank were most important in providing satisfaction to customers and areas where significant gaps existed. From the present study it can be concluded that the highest gap was found in the dimension of reliability and empathy and few suggestions have been provided to improve on these factors. The banks have to reduce this gap giving individual personal attention to understand customer specific needs.

3. Objectives

- 1. To identify the relationship between demographical factors and opinion towards the expected service quality of the customers.
- 2. To ascertain the perceptions of customers regarding the service quality in banks.
- 3. To compare the State Bank of India and ICICI bank on the basis of customer's expectations and perceptions of quality of services..

4. Variables used for the study

The following variables are used for collection of data:

- The demographic Variables in the study include age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, Occupation and annual income.
- SERQUELdimensions Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy.

5. Research Design

Descriptive research design has been used for this study and a survey has done for fact-finding inquiries of different kinds. The data is collected through the questionnaire. The information is gathered from the different customers of the two banks, viz., State bank of India and ICICI bank located in the Srinagar city of Jammu and Kashmir. Forty respondents from each bank were contacted personally in order to seek fair and frank responses on quality of service in banks. The service quality model developed by Zeithmal, Parasuranam and Berry (1988) has been used in the present study. The main assumption of the model is that service quality is multidimensional concept. These dimensions contribute to the assessment of the service quality in any setting. The statements in the construct are one-dimensional and performance based, which incorporate the statements of 'SERVQUAL' model that can be used as measurement (Gupta & Agarwal, 2013) (Ananth, Ramesh, & Prabaharam, 2011). The 24statements have been grouped under five dimensions. In order to ascertain the perception of service quality. Likert's 1

5-point scale has been used for its suitability to estimate the range and variations in the perceptions. The scale 1-5 represents '5' as strongly agree and '1' as strongly disagree.

6. Data Collection

Primary Data were collected by using the questionnaire and personal contact approach. The respondents were approached personally in order to seek true and fair responses on quality of service. Secondary data has been collected from the various sites of internet, published and unpublished reports and the fact sheets of SBI Bank and ICICI Bank. For analysis of the data, weighted Mean had been used.

7. Analysis and interpretation

In line with the first objective of the study, which is to identify the relationship between demographical factors and opinion towards the expected service quality of the customers of SBI and ICICI Bank

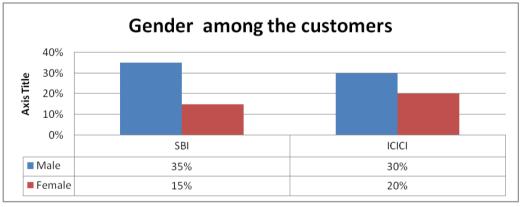
Gender among the customers

Since the Gender among the customers has its own impact on the level of estimation and perception on the service quality of banks, it is included as one of the profile variables. The nature of estimation and perception on the bank's services may completely differ from male to female. The Gender among the customers is illustrated in Table 1

Bank customers Total Sex SBI ICICI F % F % Male 35 24 30 65 28 52 12 15 16 20 28 35 Female Total 40 50 40 50 80 100

Table 1 Gender among the customers





In total, 65 percent of the total customers are males whereas the remaining 35 percent of the total customers are females. The dominant sex of the customers in both the SBI and ICICI bank is male. In SBI, it constitutes 50 per cent to the total in which the male customers is 35 percent and the female customers is 15 percent whereas in ICICI, it constituted 50 percent to the total in which the percentage of male is 30 percent and the percentage of female is 20 percent.

Ages among the Customers

The age of the customers represents his/her experience in banking and it also determines their estimations and perceptions of various aspects in banking. In general, the aged customers may have more experience and they may expect more service from the banks. At the same time, the youngsters may be inexperienced but they may be aware of the innovative services offered by the banks. Hence, the age of the customers is one of the important profiles of the customers. In the recent

study, the age of the customers is confined to less than 25 years, 25 to 40 years, 40 to 55 years and above 55 years. The

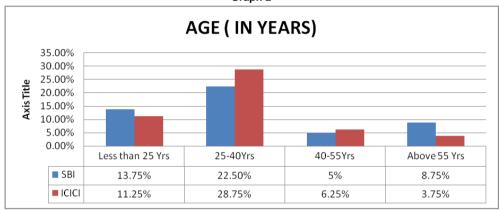
age among the customers is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Ages among the Customers

		Bank customers			Total			
Age	SBI ICICI		SBI		SBI ICICI			
	F	%	F	%	1			
Less than 25 Yrs	11	13.75	9	11.25	20	25		
25-40Yrs	18	22.5	23	28.75	41	51.25		
40-55Yrs	4	5	5	6.25	9	11.25		
Above 55 Yrs	7	8.75	3	3.75	10	12.50		
Total	40	50	40	50	80	100		

Source:-Primary Survey

Graph 2



The first two major age groups among the customers in the present study are less than 25 years and 25-40 years, constitute 25 and 51.25 per cent to the total. The most important age group in State Bank of India and ICICI bank are 25 to 40 years, less than 25 years and 40 to 55 years respectively. The number of customers aged above 55 years constitutes only 8.75, and 3.75percent to the respective total in SBI and ICICI bank.

The level of education provides more awareness of banking to the customers and exposure on the present Banking experience in years. The educated customers may have more awareness and exposure on these aspects in general. Hence, the comparative analysis may have its impact on perception of the services offered by the banks. So, the level of education is included as one of the profile variables in the present study. It is confined to Primary, intermediate, graduation and post graduation.

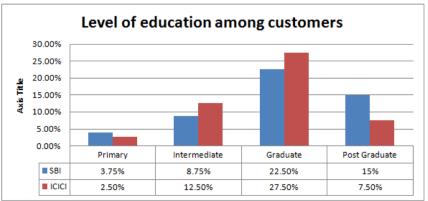
Level of Education among the Customers

Table 3 Level of Education among the Customers

	Bank customers				T	otal
Education	S	BI	IC	ICI		
	F	%	F	%		
Primary	3	3.75	2	2.5	5	6.25
Intermediate	7	8.75	10	12.5	17	21.25
Graduate	18	22.5	22	27.5	40	50
Post Graduate	12	15	6	7.5	18	22.5
Total	40	50	40	50	80	100

Source:-Primary Survey

Graph 3



The important level of education among the customers is graduation and post graduation, which constitute 50 and 22.5 percent to the total respectively where as intermediate and primary level constitutes only 6.25 and 21.25 percent. In State Bank of India, the Graduate and Post graduate level constitute 22.5 and 15 percent where as Primary and Intermediate constitute 3.75 and 8.75 percent. In ICICI bank Graduate and post Graduate level constitute 27.5 and 7.5 percent and in Primary and intermediate level it constitute 27.5 and 7.5 percent

The occupation of the customers may determine the level of estimation and perception on the services quality of the banks. Hence it is included as one of the profile variables. The level of estimation may vary from fixed income groups to business groups. It also varies from professionals to ordinary people. The level of expectation and perception may be also influenced by diverse occupations. In the present study, the occupation among the customers is grouped into Govt. employee, private employee, businessman and professional. The occupation among the customers is shown in Table 4.

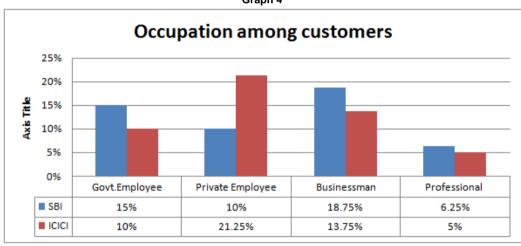
Occupation among the Customers

Table 4 Occupation among the Customers

	Bank customers			Total			
Occupation	SBI ICICI		occupation SBI ICICI		CICI		
	F	%	F	%	1		
Govt.Employee	12	15	8	10	20	25	
Private Employee	8	10	17	21.25	25	31.25	
Businessman	15	18.75	11	13.75	26	32.50	
Professional	5	6.25	4	5	9	11.25	
Total	40	50	40	50	80	100	

Source:-Primary Survey

Graph 4



A maximum of 32.50 percent of the customers, belong to business group. It is followed by private employee and Government employees, which constitute 31.25and 25 percent respectively. In State Bank of India, the first two important occupations are Government employee and Businessman which constitute 15 and 18.75 percent to its total respectively whereas in the ICICI, these two are Private Employees and Businessman which constitute 21.25and 13.75 percent to the total respectively.

Monthly Income among the Customers

The monthly income represents the personal income of the customers per month. Since the monthly income of the customers is one of the important factors determining the standard of living of the customers, it is included as one of the profile variables. The standard of living may have its own impact on the awareness, and perception on the service quality offered by banks. The higher income people may generally expect more service quality from the banks compared to its counterparts. In the present study, the monthly income among the customers is confined to below Rs.10000, Rs.10001 - 20000, Rs.20001 - Rs.30000 and above Rs.30000. the distribution of customers on the basis of their monthly income is illustrated in Table

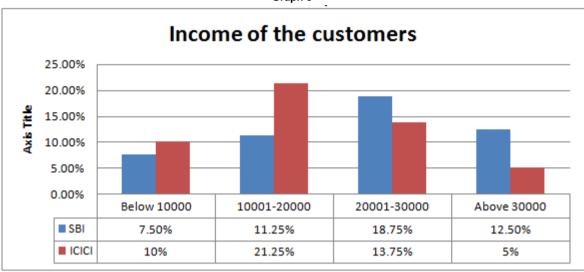
Table 5 Monthly Income among the Customers

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Income	Bank customers				То	tal
	SBI		SBI ICICI			
	F	%	F	%		
Below 10000	6	7.5	8	10	14	17.5
10001-20000	9	11.25	17	21.25	26	32.50

20001-30000	15	18.75	11	13.75	26	32.50
Above 30000	10	12.5	4	5	14	17.5
Total	40	50	40	50	80	100

Source: Primary Survey

Graph 5



The important monthly income among the customers is Rs.10,001 to 20,000 and 20001-30000.In SBI the most important group is 20001 to 30000 and Above 30000. In the case of ICICI bank, the important categories of monthly income are Rs.10001 to 20000 and 20001-30000, which constitute 21.25 and 13.75 percent to the total respectively. The number

of customers who earned above Rs.30000 constitutes 17.5 percent to the total.

Type of Account of Customers

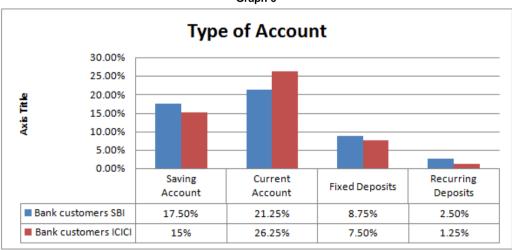
In the present study, the type of account number among the customers is confined to savings A/c, Current A/c, Fixed Deposit and Recurring Deposit. The type of account number among the customers is given in table and graph 6

Table 6 Type of Account of customers

	Total	
%		
15	26	32.50
26.25	38	47.50
7.5	13	16.25
1.25	3	3.75
50	80	100
26.25 7.5 1.25		38 13 3

Source:-Primary Survey

Graph 6



A maximum of 47.50 percent of the customers, are current account holders. It is followed by savings account holders and

FD account holders, which constitute 32.50 and 16.25 percent respectively. In State Bank of India, 17.50 percent of the

respondents are savings account holders and 21.25 percent of the respondents are current account holders followed by fixed deposit and Recurring Deposits which constitute 8.75 and 2.25 percent. In ICICI bank, the savings account, current account, Fixed Deposit and Recurring Deposit account holders constitute 15, 26.25, 7.5 and 1.24 percent to the total respectively.

In line with the Secondobjective of the study, the main areas of questioning and analysis concerned perceptions of service quality and its dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. As stated, perceptions were measured on a five point strongly agree to strongly disagree scale.

Table 7 Perceptions of Customers about banks Tangibility

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Servqual Dimension	SBI Mean	ICICI mean
Modern Equipments	2.90	3.80
Infrastructure	2.64	3.98
Neat In appearance	3.30	3.90
Parking facilities	2.20	2.60
Seat space	2.80	4.10
Dress code of employees	3.80	3.60
Total	17.64	21.98

Source: Authors own calculation using Primary data.

The data in Table-7 brings to light the difference in the perceptions of the banks--SBI and ICICI with their respective customers on tangibles. The data reveals that banks such as ICICI (21.98) are exceeding the perceptions of their customers when compared to SBI. While SBI with a mean of 17.64 falls short below the perceptions of their customers on this dimension of service quality when compared to ICICI. The element wise analysis of tangibility shows serious short fall of perceptions among banks like SBI on up to date modern equipment, infrastructure in a bank, neat in appearance, Parking facilities and Seat Space as perceived by their respective customers. While SBI have outperformed ICICI regarding Dress code of employees.

Table 8 Perceptions of Customers about banks Reailibility

Servqual Dimension	SBI Mean	ICICI mean
Do something as per the promise	2.68	3.38
Fulfil the customer needs	2.47	3.68
Error free Statements and reports	3.22	3.03
Provide services at promised times	2.82	3.38
Handling Grievances of the customers	3.18	2.34
Total	14.37	15.81

Source:-Authors own calculation using Primary data

The analysis of reliability dimension of service quality shows significant differences in the perceptions of SBI with their respective customers. SBI (14.37) shows that they fall below the expectations of their customers in delivering quality services, whereas ICICI (15.81) is exceeding the perceptions of

their customers in this dimension. The element wise analysis of reliability shows that SBI is far below the perceptions of their respective customers as far as keeping promise, Interest in solving problem, and providing service at promised time are concerned.

Table 9 Perceptions of Customers about banks Responsiveness

Servqual Dimension	SBI Mean	ICICI mean
Information from the employees about the Job performance	2.63	3.86
Giving prompt services to customers	2.52	3.33
Willingness of the staff to answer	2.12	3.92
Never too busy to respond to customer request	2.72	3.14
Helping customers in Urgency	2.92	3.20
Total	12.91	17.45

The data in Table 9 brings to light that there are significant perceptual differences on the responsiveness dimension of service quality with their customers. SBI (12.91) shows that the bank is far below the perceptions of their customers on the said dimension when compared with ICICI (17.45). The element

wise analysis of this dimension shows that SBI is falling below the perceptions of their customers on communicating to the customer regarding performance of service, employees providing prompt services and willingness to help customers.

Table 10 Perceptions of Customers about banks Assurance

Servqual Dimension	SBI Mean	ICICI mean
Employees behaviour	3.38	3.43
Being safe In the transactions	3.66	3.50
Provide consistently courteous	3.08	3.98
Having Knowledge to answer customers questions	3.16	2.92
Total	13.28	13.83

Source:-Authors own calculation using Primary data

The perceptual difference between ICICI (13.83) and SBI (13.28) customers is low as is evident from the mean. The respondents of SBI and ICICI have given almost equal rating on assurance dimension to both the banks. The element wise analysis shows that ICICI is exceeding the perceptions of their

customers as far as trust worthiness and courteous with customers. While SBI is exceeding ICICI in feeling safe in transacting with the bank and having adequate knowledge in answering questions to the customers.

Table 11 Perceptions of Customers about banks Empathy

Servqual Dimension	SBI Mean	ICICI mean
Convenient working hours	2.14	4.21
Staff's personal attention towards the customers	2.92	3.76
Having customers interest at heart	2.95	3.80
Understand the specific needs of the customers	2.96	3.65
Total	10.97	15.42

Source:-Authors own calculation using Primary data

The data analysis of Table-11 discloses the fact that banks such as SBI (10.97) stand away from their customers regarding delivery of quality services when compared with ICICI (15.42).

There exists a wide gap between the perceptions of banks such as SBI and their customers as is evident from there mean

Table-12:Overall Service Quality

Servqual dimension	SBI mean	ICICI mean
1.Tangibility	17.64	21.98
2.Realibility	14.37	15.81
3.Responsiveness	12.91	17.45
4.Assurance	13.28	13.83
5.Empathy	10.97	15.42
Total	69.17	84.49

The analysis of Table-12 clearly shows that there exists wide perceptual difference among SBI bank regarding overall service quality with their respective customers, whereas the said perceptual difference in ICICI bank is narrow. The mean of SBI (69.17) when compared to mean of ICICI (84.49) shows that there is a significant difference in the quality of service being delivered by SBI with the quality of service as perceived by their respective customers. In other words, service quality delivered by banks such as ICICI is higher than that of SBI.

8. Conclusion

Service quality should be used as a strategic tool to get a competitive advantage over the competitors. After the globalisation the competition in the banking industry has increased Any Where 'and 'any time banking now become a reality. Recognition of service quality now acts as a competitive Weapon. State bank of India fall much below the perception of their customers on all dimensions of service quality like Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy where as in ICICI bank the perceptions of customers

are exceeding on all dimensions of service quality. The above findings also suggest the need and relevance of heavy investement on tangibles mainly computer based banking, internet and intranet services, tele banking, anywhere and anytime banking Etc.The is very fruitful in delivering quick and perfect services to customers as well as reducing the workload of employees. It is essential for Every service sector whether banking sector or any other sector that the customers service must match with marketing efforts if the customer's needs and wants are not fulfilled according to their own will then all the marketing efforts will go down the drain. Banks must pay attention to potential failure points and service recovery procedures which become integral to employees training. In nut shull it can be concluded that the Banks should continuously access and reacess how customers perceive bank services so as to know whether the bank meets or exceeds or is below the expectations of their customers. The research findings also uphold the strategic importance of the continuousimprovement and service quality as lubricants of successful change management.

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