



THE SERVICE ZONE OF TOLERANCE: A TEEN PERSPECTIVE

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The purposes of the study were to (1) describe the zone of tolerance for teen consumers' service expectations and (2) determine if the zone of tolerance varied by demographic characteristics. A sample (n=467) was drawn from four southwest high schools representing a variety of disciplines.

Teens' adequate and desired service expectations were measured using a 22-item modified version of the SERVQUAL scale (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1991). The "zone of tolerance" was calculated using a gap analysis (desired service minus minimum service = zone of tolerance). One way ANOVAs tested differences between teens' service zone of tolerance and demographic characteristics. Results from the gap analysis revealed that teens have a narrow zone of tolerance on each of the five dimensions: assurance (GS = -1.04.); empathy (GS = 1.16); reliability (GS = -.97); responsiveness (GS = 1.02); and tangibles (GS = .93). A one-way ANOVA revealed that females were more tolerant than males on the assurance dimension [$F(1, 382) = 3.972, p = .05$]. There were no significant differences between the gap scores and the remaining demographic characteristics.

Responding appropriately to the service expectations of teens may result in retailers raising their service quality levels, particularly for those attributes identified as the most important to teen consumers.

Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1991). Refinement and assessment of the SERVQUAL scale. *Journal of Retailing*, 67(4), 420-450.