**Application of the GAP model of service quality: An empirical case from Greece**

Kelpetsidou Kalliopi, Liouta Varvara, Martsiou Katerina

Students in Business Administration and Economics,

The University of Sheffield, International Faculty CITY College, Thessaloniki Greece

and Antigoni Papadimitriou, Ass. Professor, JHU

**Abstract**

The constant growth of the service sector has created the need to distinguish the service nature from the products’ and also to create a new marketing domain applying only to services. Concepts such as the 7Ps, customer relationships and service quality are crucial. Studies have uncovered the fact that customer satisfaction is strongly associated with the level of service quality. Understanding service quality is indispensable for service providers aspiring to attract and retain customers. It is widely accepted today that service quality is a multi-dimensional concept. Thus, over the years, services have adopted and developed different marketing techniques and tools. Applicable models like the marketing triangle, three levels of product, the gap model, SERVQUAL, among others, assist in a deeper understanding of customers’ perceptions, the importance of relationships, the employees’ effect on customer retention and other key issues. Quality has a crucial role into the customer’s loyalty. By all means, services should try to make customers’ perceptions meet their expectations. The GAP model suggests one way to define quality, identify possible problems, and predict loyalty.

For leading companies, following the consumers’ preferences is important. This paper focuses on McDonald’s service quality levels examined both from a literature perspective as well as an empirical study (i.e. observations). McDonald’s is a global leader in the food and beverage sector. However, the company has not achieved customer retention in Greece and the analysis of the data collected by the authors through the observations has helped in identifying the gaps in customer service standards, HR and communication levels. By adjusting more to the Greek culture and acquiring customization as a strategy as well as paying better attention to their rewarding programs for employees, McDonald’s can achieve the elimination of the gap between customer perceptions and expectations aiming to retain customer loyalty and strengthen their position in the Greek public.